

37

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Australian MOTORCYCLIST

FREE INSIDE: TEAR-OUT AUSTRALIAN MOTORCYCLE RIDE MAP

MARCH 2016



BEAR INSIDE

AUSTRALIAN MOTORCYCLIST BEST ISSUE

TRIUMPH
NIGHT
STORM

BEST HEAVY
METAL

KAWASAKI
Z1000

BEST FUN BIKE

TOUR
SPECIAL

THE BEST
RIDES IN
THE WORLD

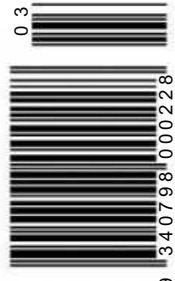
DUCATI
DIAVEL
TITANIUM

BEST
PRECIOUS
METAL

BEST ROAD OVERSEAS / DOWN THE DARLING / DEADLY ISLE
/ OZ OR US – WHICH IS BETTER? / TWO PUBS THIS MONTH /
MAP OF THE FAR WEST / IS YOUR FASTER TURN LEFT OR RIGHT?

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- Dinner for 2 at Clint Eastwood's Mission Ranch Restaurant in Carmel
- 2 adult tickets to the 2016 Mecum Monterey Auction
- 2 adult Club d'Elegance tickets to the 2016 Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance
- 2 adult tickets to the 2016 Monterey Motorsports Reunion at Laguna Seca
- \$1,000 (AUD) spending money, additional \$4,000 if you are a Shannons Club member⁺
- PLUS win an all new 2016 Indian Scout Sixty Motorcycle valued at up to \$17,995 inc. of all on road costs

To enter go to shannons.com.au/pebblebeach or call 13 46 46 and obtain an eligible quote on your Car, Bike or Home Insurance[^] by 30 April 2016. Take out a new policy[^] to receive 5 entries.



WIN THIS BIKE!

Total prize pool valued at approx. \$42,388.70 (depending on major prize winner's point of departure). Prizes drawn at 12pm on 18/5/2016 at Salmat Digital Pty Ltd, L2, 116 Miller St, Nth Sydney NSW 2060. The winners will be notified by phone and email by 20/5/2016 and published in The Australian newspaper on 25/5/2016 and on the competition website. *Car hire is subject to the terms and conditions specified by the car hire provider. + An Eligible Shannons Club Member is a Shannons Club member who has created a member profile, uploaded a profile image and images of an enthusiast vehicle and an ultimate vehicle at shannons.com.au/club. ^ New Shannons Motor Insurance or Shannons Home & Contents insurance quotes/sales only (renewals and CTP quotes/sales ineligible). Limit 1 quote per vehicle or insured address. Permits: ACT TP 15/08324, NSW LTPS/15/09752, SA T15/2331. Full competition terms and conditions at shannons.com.au/pebblebeach.

CONTENTS

SPECIAL FEATURE

BIKE TOURS AROUND THE WORLD
The best rides you'll find anywhere

28

TESTING

KAWASAKI Z1000
The best fun bike for the road

16

DUCATI DIAVEL TITANIUM
The best use of precious metal yet

20

TRIUMPH NIGHT STORM
SPECIAL EDITION
The best use of black and heavy metal

40

TRAVELLING

STUART'S BEST ROAD OVERSEAS
This one's the best of the best, folks

46

TOP TOURS
More of the best bike tours anywhere

52

GOIN' UP THE COUNTRY
The best ride just up from Sydney

61

DARLING RIVER RUN
The best Outback adventure
for road riders

67

ISLE OF MAN TT: FATAL ATTRACTION
It's the best, but it's also the deadliest

72

PUB OF THE MONTH
What could be better than
two pubs at once?

78

BIKE TRAVEL Q&A
The best of Oz versus the best of the USA

83

TEAR-OUT MAP

COAST ROAD WITH NO COAST
Best we head for the west

50

TECHNICAL

GRYPHON
The best mix of new versus custom

24

LEFT OR RIGHT
Which is your best cornering
side – and why?

44

"THE BEST IS THE BEST, THOUGH A HUNDRED
JUDGES HAVE DECLARED IT SO."

SIR ARTHUR QUILLER-COUCH, PREFACE, OXFORD BOOK OF ENGLISH VERSE (1900)

20



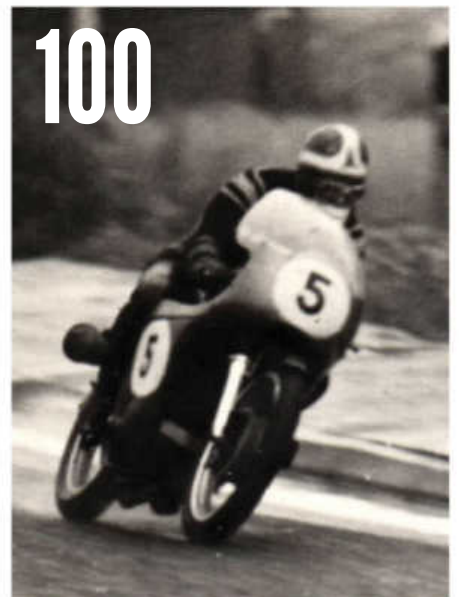
NIGHT STORM
IS JUST AS
IMPRESSIVE
BY DAY.
PAGE 40



16



100



Kawasaki



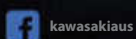
Ninja **ZX-10R** 2016 PURE SUPERBIKE



DIRECTLY INSPIRED AND DEVELOPED FROM THE CHAMPIONSHIP WINNING WORLD SUPERBIKES OF TOM SYKES AND JONATHAN REA, THE 2016 NINJA ZX-10R IS THE CLOSEST THING TO A FACTORY SUPERBIKE KAWASAKI HAVE PRODUCED YET.

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What are the best things to do to your bike?

THE BEST OLD BOOTS

Does the Bear really need six pairs?

AND THE REST

EDITORIAL

All the way from Unzud, for you!

GRIZZLING

It wasn't much of a contest, but...

NEWS

The best news is no news. Oh, sorry

BEAR ARMY MANOEUVRES

The best weekend away

BACK ISSUES OF MOTORCYCLIST

Get 'em while we've still got 'em

CLASSIC MORRIS

One of the best is gone

WHAT SAY YOU?

Not everybody thinks we're the best!

PRICE LIST

Best check our comprehensive list

ADVERTISER'S LIST

These blokes are the best. Seriously

FROM THE CAVE

The best he can remember, anyway

BORIS

At his best. Can you spell curmudgeon? He can!

75

86

88

92

96

8

10

12

43

98

100

105

109

112

113

114

OLD
SCHOOL
TOP HIT.
PAGE 24



46



78



Australian Motorcyclist Magazine



Australian Motorcyclist Magazine



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recycle this magazine.



EDITOR SPEAKS



what's he blabbing on about now?

I'm writing this overlooking Lake Wakatipu and The Remarkables in Queenstown, New Zealand. I'm on our second Australian Motorcyclist 'Hiamo' South Island tour with the awesome folk at Paradise Motorcycle Tours NZ. My wife Alana was lucky enough to get time to join me and the lovely readers who have come along. It just so happens that our wedding anniversary is a couple of days after the end of this tour. What a way to celebrate, by riding a motorcycle with our great readers around the South Island in all its wondrous beauty! On top of that, the South Island (especially Queenstown) is Alana's favourite place in the world.

When you ride in New Zealand (well, mainly the South Island) you notice the lack of Police once you get "out of the town" and the excellent condition of almost all the roads. This allows you to enjoy yourself more by not totally concentrating on your speedometer all the time. You can see the sights. Not that you'll be punching up many ks anyway, because you don't want to miss the scenery, and there's lots of it!

The good roads also mean you don't have to constantly look for potholes, making for a relaxed time on the bike – seeing the sights. That is what the South Island is all about. If you haven't been there you MUST ride it at some time in your life. It will knock the breath out of you and give you feelings of euphoria you've never experienced – it really is that good. Remember the 'Fisherman's Friend' television ad from a few years ago, where the person having one of the lozenges gets smacked in the face by a wet fish? That's the kind of

eye-popping amazement you'll be treated to [no, you will not be smacked in the face or anywhere else with a wet fish – Ed] and Paradise Motorcycle Tours NZ are among the best in the business.

Look for our next tour in 2017 which may give you a different perspective of NZ, possibly including some dirt roads. We might also have another route in mind that will blow you away – watch the pages of AMM to see what we come up with.

We also plan to hold another tour in 2017, but we need your input. Where do you really want to go? Vietnam, Thailand, Malaysia, Europe, America, Spain? Somewhere else? You let us know, and we will organise it for you, our readers, with one of our advertisers. We try to include special places you would not get by yourself. As the Bear Army has shown, you guys get on really well with each other, so why not "come see the sights" with either The Bear or me?

Send us an email to stuart@ausmotorcyclist.com.au or thebear@ausmotorcyclist.com.au or a letter to PO Box 2066, Boronia Park NSW 2111. We'll also pose this question on our Facebook page if you'd like to respond that way.

We got a great idea from one of our readers via email regarding the various Motorcycle Councils – "why don't you have a 'Council Update' each issue, so that they are not so foreign to everybody". A great idea, so we open it up to the various Motorcycle Councils around Australia. Send us your info so motorcyclists can get to know you better!

Now where is that cold beer, this view is too good to miss!

Cheers, Stuart.

REMEMBER YOURSELF WHY YOU RIDE

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- ▶ Full power parallel twin
- ▶ Sublime handling
- ▶ Compact package - only 169kg wet



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Modern day equivalent of an RD350LC"*
Jeff Ware, Australian motorcycle journalist

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Boris Mihailovic, BikeMe

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SPELING NORT GUT

One last police item. Sometimes urban myths are just too good to ignore. At the pub the other day someone mentioned that Carinda, in country NSW, has a spectacular two-storey police station complete with a courtroom. All for a town of about

200 people. The reason for this, he claimed, was that the public servant taking notes when the decision was made to build the station got the name wrong; it was supposed to be Quirindi. That has a population of either 2500 or 3500, depending on the source you use, and could have done with a police station like that.

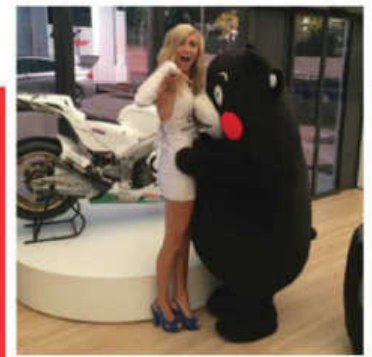
Here's an appeal to our NSW country readers – did Carinda really get Quirindi's police station?



Here is the latest entry in the “honesty in advertising” campaign. You have to admire the professional way the signwriting on the insert has been done. Or... could this actually be a genuine sign? Naah!



Roll your own, eh! What is it about girls in police uniform? Note that I don't mean policewomen, the real ones. They tend to be a bit... intimidating. For good reason, too. An American friend of mine once picked up – or if truth be known, was picked up by – an attractive young lady in a bar. When he woke up the next morning he was secured to the bed with a suspiciously genuine-looking pair of handcuffs. The young lady, now dressed in a State Trooper's uniform, stuck her head into the bedroom and said, "I'm going on duty. If you promise you'll still be here when I get back I'll unlock the cuffs." And yes, they have now been married for more than 25 years...



Caption Competition

I buggered up the response date for our competition in #35 and set it for the same date the magazine hit the stands – no accounting for counting, especially if it's wrong... We still got a few pretty good responses.

"Oh Bear!" wrote Josh from Drummoyne. "There's no honey there!" "Oh yeah, that feels so 'bearable'... but I'd rather feel a 'bare' behind!" was what John Mayhew came up with.

Finally, Paul from KoldTek suggested
“Not Motorcyclist! MOTORBOAT!
Brrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrrr!”

Because I made that mistake with the date, I'm going to give them all a water resistant phone/passport pouch. Postal addresses, gentlemen, please?


Peter 'The Bear' Thoeming



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TOBY TAKES IT

Dakar Rally 2016

Aussie Toby Price has won Dakar 2016 on only his second attempt! Having impressed the world with his 3rd place last year as a privateer, he was taken on by KTM Factory Racing as one of their riders for 2016. He showed the team what he could do right from the he finish line. Toby won Dakar 2016 by 39 minutes, 41 seconds!

Toby goes down in the history books as the first rider in the world to win on only his second attempt and he also goes down in the history books as the first Aussie to have won the motorbike division of the Dakar Rally.

We followed Dakar 2016 right from Stage One on our Facebook page and we're sure that this is only the first of many wins and bucket loads of podiums over the coming years for Toby. If you've seen what Toby can do at the Finke Desert Rally, then you'll know he has the makings of being one of the all-time greats of Dakar. And all this despite having been left almost a paraplegic when he broke his back just over two years ago. With his down to earth Aussie nature, Toby is a great example of how it's done.

SILVER CELEBRATIONS

Akrapovič turns 25!

It's hard to believe that legendary exhaust manufacturer Akrapovič has only just turned 25. You would think

by the way the brand dominates the market that it would be much older. This significant landmark will be celebrated throughout the year with various events and the highly exciting



production of a severely limited edition of selected motorcycle and car exhaust systems.

To kick off the celebrations, Akrapovič has prepared a special logo to mark the occasion, featuring an interlocked "25" in the shape of a racetrack, with a chicane design element. This honours one of the most important parts of the firm's history: the highly emotive and exciting world of racing.

The logo debuted on the 2016 Akrapovič calendar, with creative illustrations that reflect some of the company's major milestones since its inception in 1991, when it was founded by Igor Akrapovič. Happy Birthday, Akrapovič!

EXCITING ADVENTURE

Touratech Adventure Challenge

The Alpine town of Bright will be

the place to be on March 19 when the inaugural motorcycle Touratech Adventure Challenge hits town. The day will feature the Adventure Challenge riders entering in a number of skill-based tests throughout the day. Spectators will get to see the action first hand, as well as taking the opportunity to test ride motorcycles from seven different manufacturers.

Bright has an endless number of other activities to keep visitors occupied, whether all family members are interested in the Adventure Challenge or not.

"Bright is the perfect place to base this brand new event," Touratech's Robin Box said. For more info on the 2016 Touratech Adventure Challenge, visit www.touratech.com.au, call Touratech Australia (03) 5729 5529, or try email at info@touratech.com.au

THANKS, SCRAMBLER



Ducati sales record

Ducati closed 2015 with its best-ever results, confirming the positive trend of the last five years that has seen a steady increase in production and sales. With 54,800 bikes sold during 2015, Ducati set a new record by delivering 9683 more bikes to customers than in 2014, an increase of 22%. It was primarily the introduction of the Scrambler that helped push those sales sky high.

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The best-selling Ducati in 2015, the Ducati Scrambler sold 16,000 bikes during the 12-month period. Including one to us!

PHANTOM TRIUMPHS

Pirelli and Triumph Bonneville

The historic partnership between Pirelli and Triumph has been renewed with the new Triumph Bonneville range, which is fitted with the Pirelli Phantom Sportscomp tyres. To celebrate, Pirelli and Triumph have created a special bike based on the new Street Twin.

The Triumph Street Twin by Pirelli presents the livery used by the Bonneville in 1977, the year in which the Pirelli Phantom Sportscomp was born, with some elements of customisation. It has the legendary Pirelli graphic logo "Scudetto and Stella" on the front mudguard and the tread pattern of the Phantom



Sportscomp on the tank. Sadly, it's not a production model for you and me, only a show bike.

RIDE THE RIBBON

White Ribbon Ride

Laura Brown (pictured) is holding a White Ribbon Ride to raise awareness of Domestic Violence. Statistics show that up to 80% of cases go unreported which Laura hopes to help change by raising awareness. The ride will start at 9am McGraths Hill McDonald's the 5th of March. Free refreshments will be provided by McDonald's on arrival. White Ribbon bags will be available for purchase for \$5. They contain a white ribbon and lots of motorcycle vouchers/discounts.

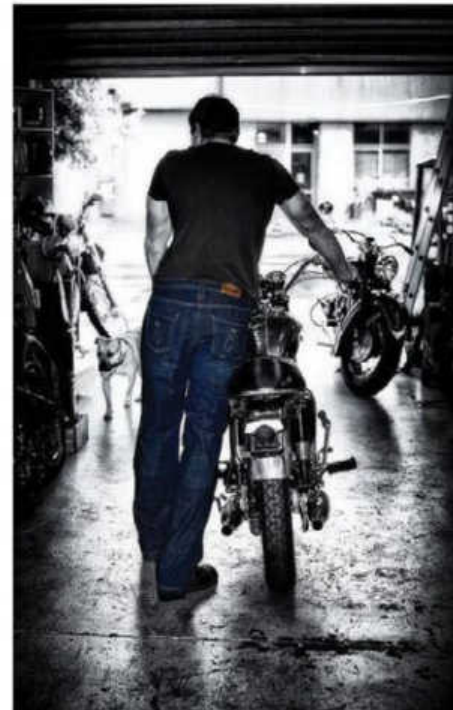
The ride finishes at the Grey Gum Cafe on the Putty Rd. There will be a live band provided, BBQ and refreshments available. Raffles of hundreds of dollars value will also be carried out.

Contact Laura with any enquires: laurabrown355@hotmail.com

GOLDEN CELEBRATIONS

Kevlar turns 50 and names Draggin!

As part of DuPont Kevlar's 50th Anniversary Celebration, Draggin jeans have been listed as one of the 50 best products to use Kevlar. Draggin is honoured by this, not only as making one of the best products



but also as the only Australian company listed.

As always, they strive to be the motorcycle protective clothing brand to protect you and add both fashion and safety to your motorcycling. Visit www.dragginjeans.net

BAZZAAA!!!

2016 Barry Sheene

Festival of Speed

Do not miss out on the Barry Sheene Festival of Speed, being held at Sydney Motorsport Park from 18-20 March. Even more legends



are coming out to enjoy the action. The line-up now includes Chris Vermeulen, Jeremy McWilliams, Graeme Crosby (The Mighty Crozza himself! – Ed.), Freddie Spencer, Kevin Schwantz, Kork Ballington, Steve Parrish, Kevin Magee and Maria Costello. Grab your tickets from www.barrysheene.com.au ●

IT'S TIME TO SAVE SOME GREAT AMERICAN DOLLARS



Since 2002 we've hosted riders from all over the world. Recently, the strength of the American Dollar has made visiting us more costly for our friends from outside the USA.

We'd like to make it a little easier for you to take the ride you've dreamed about in 2016!

Guided Motorcycle Tour Fees have been REDUCED up to \$500 per person

BEST of the WEST

Guided Tour • 23 Aug. - 7 Sep. 2016 • 14 Ride Days

Best of the West was over a year in the making - in collaboration with Peter "The Bear" Thoeming, Editor of Australian Motorcyclist Magazine. Together we created a once-in-a-lifetime motorcycling experience.

We had a great run in 2015 - read all about the Bear's journey with us in the December 2015 issue. It's a fantastic ride that will be even better in 2016 and you're invited!

Our adventure starts and ends in Los Angeles and includes Grand Canyon, Capitol Reef, Bryce Canyon, Zion, Joshua Tree, Death Valley, Yosemite, Kings Canyon and Sequoia National Parks. You'll see the lowest AND the highest elevations in the US - 282' (86m) below sea level in Death Valley to 14,505' (4,421m) at Mt. Whitney. Plus a very special tour of Monument Valley, two nights in Las Vegas, Route 66, the Pacific Coast and much more.

Fourteen days of riding and memories to last a lifetime!



STURGIS BIKE WEEK

Guided Tour • 7-14 August 2016 • 12 Ride Days

It's not just Bike Week! Meet us in Las Vegas and spend twelve days riding through some of the most spectacular scenery in the American West. Feel the wind in your face and the steady rumble of your iron horse beneath you. Each day the thunder builds, until you join over 500,000 of your new friends in Sturgis. Don't miss the biggest motorcycle event on Planet Earth!



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**3-18 June 2016 • 14 Ride Days
14 Oct. - 1 Nov. 2016 • 17 Ride Days**

On Route 66, the magic is in the stops, the local history and the folks you'll meet along the way. Immerse yourself in a view of America that's not much changed since the last century. We ride from the heart of the American midwest in Chicago to the Pacific in Los Angeles. Don't get left behind!



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Stuart is wearing a Shark Speed-R 2 helmet, Dririder EXO 2 jacket, Dririder Stealth gloves, Draggin Next Gen jeans and Berik GPX 2.0 boots.

KAWASAKI Z1000

THE GOLDEN SLIPPER

WORDS STUART WOODBURY PHOTOS NICK WOOD

“ Oh my my, oh my my,
You can boogie, you can slide... ”
Ringo Starr

The ‘beastly’ Kawasaki Z1000 was released in its current Transformer styling some two years ago, but for 2016 it has been given a slipper clutch and, er, burgundy anodised fork tubes.

Taking off, or low speed work using the clutch lever on the previous model was always a little jerky. The clutch wanted to ‘hunt’, or give a pulsating sensation and it made the Z1000 a little hard to ride, but that has all gone now with the fitting of an assist and slipper clutch.

Developed based on feedback from racing activities, the clutch uses two types of cams (an assist cam and a slipper cam), offering two new functions. When the engine is operating at normal rpm (what’s normal?) the assist cam functions as a self-servo mechanism, pulling the clutch hub and operating plate together to compress the clutch plates. This allows the total clutch spring load to be reduced, resulting in a lighter clutch lever pull when operating the clutch. Fewer (3 versus 5 on the previous model) clutch springs translate to a 30 per cent lighter clutch lever feel, and no matter how much or how little strength you have in your left hand, the clutch is easily light enough to handle.

When excessive engine braking occurs





— as a result of quick downshifts (or an accidental one) — the slipper cam comes into play, forcing the clutch hub and operating plate apart. This relieves pressure on the clutch plates to reduce back-torque and help prevent the rear tyre from hopping and skidding.

Having both of these functions on the 2016 model Z1000 has not only made it an easier bike to ride around town, but it has also made it much smoother when you're really getting into it through the twisties.

Matching this is the sublime handling. Separate function, big piston forks give mega feedback and very neutral handling. Basically, you just point it where you want it to go and bam, that's where it goes. The rear horizontally mounted shock is well sprung and matches the front. For me, I'd give it one more turn of preload, but that's all.

The other special thing you'll find when riding the Z1000 is the connection between you and the throttle. Rolling from a closed throttle to partially open is very smooth. It's noticeable enough so that I'm mentioning it to you, because many other bikes aren't as smooth in this off to open transition area as the Z1000.

Braking is powerful, yet with great control and feedback, you also have ABS in case things do get out of hand.

Red anodised fork tubes match the Candy Crimson Red paintwork and give the Z1000 an even classier look, combined with its 'beastly' low-slung transformer style appearance. I'll tell you, if I had the money I would buy one. That has become even more possible for many of us as the price has come down by \$1300 to \$15,499 plus on-roads. A whole lot of bike for the money!

Accessories are limited but the 'Z' logoed tank and key pads add to the spectacular styling of this bike and they also match the 'Z' logoed seat.

For me, the 2016 Kawasaki Z1000 is the perfect naked bike — it's fast, sublime and looks meaner than an Alien chasing your pussycat. I urge you to go check one out; you'll see exactly what I mean. ●



SPECS

KAWASAKI Z1000

PRICE: \$15,499 (plus on-road charges)

WARRANTY: Two years, unlimited distance

SERVICING INTERVALS: Every 6000km or 12 months

ENGINE: Liquid-cooled in-line four cylinder, 4-stroke, DOHC, 4 valves per cylinder

BORE x STROKE: 77 x 56mm

DISPLACEMENT: 1043cc

COMPRESSION: 11.8:1

POWER: 105kW @ 10,000rpm

TORQUE: 111Nm @ 7300rpm

TRANSMISSION: 6-speed, wet multi-plate slipper clutch, chain final drive

SUSPENSION: Front, 41mm inverted fork, adjustable preload, compression and rebound, travel 120mm. Rear, monoshock, adjustable preload and rebound, travel 122mm.

DIMENSIONS: Seat height 815mm, weight 221kg (wet), fuel capacity 17 litres, wheelbase 1435mm

TYRES: Front, 120/70/ZR17.

Rear, 190/50/ZR17

FRAME: Twin-tube aluminium

BRAKES: Front, twin 310mm discs with radial mount four-piston ABS calipers. Rear, 250mm disc, single-piston ABS caliper.

FUEL CONSUMPTION: litres per 100km, premium unleaded

THEORETICAL RANGE: km

COLOURS: Metallic Matte Carbon Gray / Candy Crimson Red

VERDICT: TRANSFORMED AGAIN!



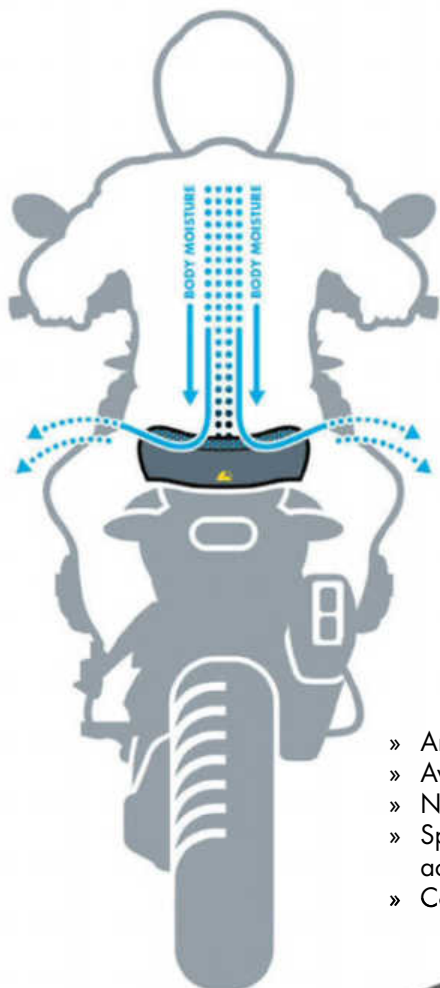
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DUCATI DIAVEL TITANIUM

LUSTROUS TRANSITION

WORDS STUART WOODBURY
PHOTOS NICK WOOD

Titanium has not been around for all that long. It was discovered in Cornwall, Great Britain, by William Gregor in 1791 and named by Martin Heinrich Klaproth for the Titans of Greek mythology. The element occurs within a number of mineral deposits, principally rutile and ilmenite, which are widely distributed in the Earth's crust and lithosphere, and it is found in almost all living things, rocks, water bodies, and soils. The metal is extracted from its principal mineral

ores via either the Kroll process or the Hunter process.

And that's not all!

Titanium, and this is where we get an idea of its importance, can be alloyed with iron, aluminium, vanadium, and molybdenum among other elements to produce strong, lightweight alloys. These are used for aerospace, military, industrial process, automotive and other applications. Ducati has used the allure of titanium to produce this limited edition version of the Ducati Diavel. Only 500 "Diavel Titanium"



units have been produced for distribution worldwide, and we got to ride number 469. Yes, there's a numbered badge.

The most useful property of titanium is the highest strength-to-density ratio of any metallic element. This means it can be used in smaller quantities to give the same strength, making it a lightweight material; and in the case of the Diavel Titanium, the bike is five kilos lighter than a standard Diavel. This weight saving is also helped by lots of carbon fibre panels.

To get yourself aboard the exclusivity of the Diavel Titanium you'll need to cough up \$39,990 plus on-roads – not cheap, but to have such a rare bike will get you lots of attention and what's better than having other riders drool over your sweet ride!

Here is a quick list of what you get over and above the standard Diavel for your money:

- Machine-finished forged aluminium wheels, black with a dedicated design

BUT TO HAVE SUCH A RARE BIKE WILL GET YOU LOTS OF ATTENTION AND WHAT'S BETTER THAN HAVING OTHER RIDERS DROOL OVER YOUR SWEET RIDE!



- Titanium central and lateral tank covers
- Titanium headlight cover
- Passenger seat cover in carbon with titanium insert
- Carbon fibre specially designed engine air intakes
- Carbon fibre radiator covers
- Carbon fibre windscreen
- Carbon fibre front and rear mudguards
- Carbon fibre front sprocket cover
- Carbon fibre tank filler surround
- Seat in Alcantara and leather
- Exhaust pipes with Zircotech ceramic lining
- Stainless-steel silencers
- Individually numbered tank-mounted plaque (XXX/500)

That's a pretty impressive list. First, the custom machined wheels alone would cost a few thousand alone. Then add in the numerous carbon parts which would add many thousands more, and you're starting to understand the price tag. And you get exclusivity as well. Now factor in the titanium, which isn't cheap in whatever form you choose it and you actually are getting a whole lot of custom motorcycle for a decent price tag.

The custom paintwork is not something you'll see on any other motorcycle either and when it comes

to people admiring your ride, paintwork is one of the first things they'll notice.

Being five kilograms lighter than a 'standard' Diavel changes the handling just in the slightest noticeable way. The Titanium is easier to turn in and flick from side-to-side and the soft leather and Alcantara seat with yellow stitching looks amazing, is very comfy and 'moulds' you into the bike. I could get used to this...

The motor, frame, suspension and brakes are the same as the 'standard' Diavel. It has the usual three programmable riding modes: Sport, Touring and Urban. I set it up in Sport with traction control off. After all, you'll want to unleash all of those 119kW and having traction on does restrict the Diavel as it senses too much aggression being fed to the fat rear tyre.

That big, fat and muscly-looking 240mm rear tyre does steer the front tyre a little through turns, but feeding a bit of emphasis into the handlebar overcomes this. It might take you a couple of weeks to get used to the style, but it's a very minor concern in the greater scheme of things.

And greater is right. If you want exclusivity, a near-custom muscle bike straight off the showroom floor and a motorcycle that will always be rare on the street, the Ducati Diavel Titanium is waiting. ●



SPECS

DUCATI DIAVEL TITANIUM

PRICE: \$39,990 (plus on-road charges)

WARRANTY: Two years, unlimited distance

SERVICING INTERVALS: Every 12,000km or 12 months

ENGINE: Liquid-cooled L-twin cylinder, 4-stroke, Desmodromic, 4 valves per cylinder

BORE x STROKE: 106 x 67.9mm

DISPLACEMENT: 1198.4cc

COMPRESSION: 12.5:1

POWER: 119kW @ 9250rpm

TORQUE: 130.5Nm @ 8000rpm

TRANSMISSION: 6-speed, wet multi-plate slipper clutch, chain final drive

SUSPENSION: Front, 50mm inverted fork, adjustable preload, compression and rebound, travel 120mm. Rear, monoshock, adjustable preload, compression and rebound, travel 120mm.

DIMENSIONS: Seat height 770mm, weight 234kg (wet), fuel capacity 17 litres, wheelbase 1590mm

TYRES: Front, 120/70/ZR17. Rear, 240/45/ZR17

FRAME: Tubular steel trellis

BRAKES: Front, twin 320mm discs with radial mount four-piston ABS calipers.

Rear, 265mm disc, dual-piston ABS caliper.

FUEL CONSUMPTION: 6.97 litres per 100km, premium unleaded

THEORETICAL RANGE: 246km

COLOURS: Titanium

VERDICT: PRECIOUS METAL



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SWEDISH CAFE CULTURE

WITH A MODERN TWIST

A trend that is continuing to grow through out the world of custom bike building is café racers. One such example of this increase in popularity of this style of bike building is Gryphon, built by Claes Wärefors, of Sweden, and entered in the World Championship of Custom Bike Building.

Claes was able to travel to the US to take part in the World Championship



after taking top honors at the Swedish affiliate show operated by Twin Club, Norrtälje. It is not uncommon for this event to feature traditional Swedish style chops with high necks, peanut tanks and wide rear wheels among its various class winners. So the fact that Claes took the overall 'Best in Show' win there demonstrates how much the world of custom bike building is changing.

While Claes did much of the work on the bike himself, as a privateer builder, he did work closely with KDK Performance, which itself is a hobby business run by Kegny Karlsson.

Among the work commissioned from KDK was the construction of the twin down tube, cradle style frame and the matching tubular swingarm, which is suspended on a

Café a la Sweden

Sweden is well known as a country of custom bike builders who produce very distinctive and radical looking choppers. However, that situation is beginning to change as can be seen in the World Championship entry of Claes Wärefors, who has put forward his take on the café racer theme with his custom build "Gryphon".





horizontally mounted Öhlins shock under the seat base.

Öhlins products are also used at the front of the bike, inside the Yamaha R1 forks that are held in place by one-off triple trees from KDK. Further parts from the R1 are used for the brakes with the calipers being used front and rear and upgraded with EBC pads and actived by IRS controls.

To get the bike to the rolling chassis stage a set of Marvic Penta wheels was then added. Both are 17in diameter with the front being 3.5in wide and the rear 6in. The wheels have been shod with Bridgestone tyres: 120/70/17 and 190/50/17 front and rear respectively.

To give the bike the performance necessary to match the café racer looks, the engine is an 88 cubic inch special by Mectec. The basis of the motor is a set of '67 Harley cases that have been built up with Truett & Osborn stroker flywheels, high compression pistons, rods and oil pump by S&S, STD heads, JIMS Lifters and a Sifton Avenger camshaft. Externally, the motor wears a modified CV40 carb and Robbans Speedshop rocker boxes.

Backing the engine is a kick start, four-speed Harley gearbox along with an open belt primary drive, while a chain takes care of the final drive.

When it came to completing the bodywork Claes once again worked with Kegny Karlsson to create the oil tank that is hidden below the transmission and the aluminum gas tank and the steel seat hump, which blends in to the frame rails and holds the taillight. Once completed, the entire package was then handed over to Bo Jensen who applied the paint to the frame and metal work.

It's not hard to see why the popularity of café racers in the custom bike world is growing, with bikes like Claes Wärefors' Gryphon. And it's not just in Sweden; not only did the bike place Best in Show in the World Championship affiliate show in Claes' home of country, it also placed fifth in the World Championship. ●

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HEY BABE, TAKE ~~A WALK~~ RIDE ON THE WILD SIDE



Why am I always on about organised tours? In the past couple of decades the world has become much more motorcycle-friendly, and tour operators have taken advantage of that. They have put together trips that we could only dream about when I started my serious touring, and they have done it at often remarkably good prices. We have helped a bit as well, by publicising the kinds of adventures on offer.

Probably the most important thing about the rides is that they don't waste time. If you don't have to worry about time, that's irrelevant – but who doesn't, these days? On an organised tour, everything is arranged for you. You arrive somewhere, perhaps you acclimatise and shake jetlag for a day or so, and then you're away. The bike, accommodation and so on are all set up for you.

When I was travelling on my little XL250, I might have crossed a border at lunchtime and headed off into Iran or Turkey or wherever without any idea where I might stay that night and how far I might get the next day or, for that matter, week. But I had time. The first half of my around-the-world trip took seven months, and the only limitation I had was when my money was going to run out. Today I struggle to justify two weeks away – I don't want to waste a day of that.

But don't take my word for it; the figures from the tour operators make it quite clear that bike travel is booming.

Keep one thing in mind, though: the important thing is that you manage to



Top to bottom: Tour operators each tend to have a speciality of some kind; Skip from GAMT finds the most amazing breakfast places you've ever seen, with wonderful food. Maxwell's is right in Los Angeles, but you might as well be out in the country... / One of the things I especially like about organised tours is the way you get to ride both famous roads and unknown side roads through the mountains. / Lunch on the road can be a satisfying meal in its own right, as you can see here on the Edelweiss tour by one of the fjords.

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HOW TO?

How do you choose your tour and operator? Skim the ads in these pages and the stuff I've written about various tours. Then drop the operator a line; the way they respond will tell you a lot about how they run their trips. Finally, research what they tell you they're going to offer you. There is so much information on the web it would choke a brown dog.

Keep in mind that the word "organised" can cover a few different ways of doing things. The most common is the full service tour, where riders are provided with a bike and a backup vehicle, as well as a guide. Accommodation is taken care of, and so are a lot of meals. Then there is the self-guided tour where you get a bike and a map, and your accommodation is booked for you. Finally there's simple bike rental – but with a map, travel suggestions and accommodation and mealtime hints included.

I have sampled the first and last of these; the first with several major tour operators, and the last with my friend Wolfgang Taft at Dubbelju Motorcycle Rentals in San Francisco and with South Pacific Motorcycle Tours in New Zealand. I would happily recommend all of them, and the self-guided tour sounds good too.

What the hell, I'd recommend anything that got me out there on the road with no worries and the unknown dead ahead!

Above and right: And of course there is always the riding. Tour operators will generally find the very best bike roads in any area. It can get quite crowded but it is wonderful. For once, photos turn out well, too ! While we're on the subject of being on the road – I doubt that I would have found the Planes of Fame air museum to which Skip took us, in suburban LA. Some fascinating aircraft, but you probably know that I'm an aircraft fan.





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Harvey 76 · Art: 5424



Carry-bag · Art: 4331



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HOW DO I KNOW?

In 2015 I went on three organised tours. It doesn't look like all that much until you include the flights out and back, which usually add three or four days to each tour. That adds up to nearly two months away. Mrs Bear has been forbearing indeed, and I am suitably grateful.

My first tour of the year was in May with Adriatic Moto Tours (Beautiful Balkans Adventure) and covered many of the new countries that have sprung up in the wake of Yugoslavia's breakup. I have loved this country side since I first saw it in 1970, but a lot has changed since then. For one thing, there are now border posts everywhere. Not that that's a problem. I rode straight through one by mistake and didn't realise what I'd done until I noticed that the rest of the group was no longer with me... I just turned around and went back; no hard feelings from the border guards. Some are a bit tougher, admittedly.

At the end of June it was time to head back over to Europe for an Edelweiss tour (Viking Experience) which gave me a chance to ride

I found this place, Antelope Canyon, and asked Skip to include it on our tour. He will be visiting it with all of his future tours in the area.

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Words from a Do-It-Yourselfer

PHIL FREEMAN, MOTOQUEST TOURS

This is a roundup of the reasons for taking an organised tour, written by an organiser. It pretty well sums the thing up. I've left Phil's company name in, but your experience with any reputable tour organiser will be very similar.

You've probably wondered "Why Take a MotoQuest Tour Instead of DIY?" Well let me tell ya...As a do-it-yourselfer myself, I know the choice between going on a guided tour with a group or planning a trip by yourself can be a tough one. People often wonder about whether they should take a guided motorcycle tour or go it alone. There are pros and cons to both but today I'd like to share with you, why we, at MotoQuest, believe that taking a guided tour might be the best choice for you.

To be honest, we have plenty of riders who take our trips, who are perfectly capable of doing it on their own. We have had pilots, ex SEAL team members, and even movie stuntmen among our past MotoQuesters. The main reason many of them opted for the guided tour was because they did not have the time to put the whole trip together, including the bike maintenance, hotel arrangements and preparations for whatever else could've happened on the road. Here are more reasons why you would take an organized tour:

Airport Pick Up/Drop Off: Your experience on a MotoQuest Adventure destination starts at the airport. Someone from our team will

meet you at the airport and then you and your luggage are whisked away, straight to the hotel. At the end of the trip, you are taken back to the airport. You don't have to worry about getting a cab or figuring out a way to get to the airport.

Social Value: You will make friends for life on these trips. Riding and making friends from all over the world and the laughter that ensues at the dinner table, especially after the inside jokes start to permeate, are priceless.

Experienced Guide: Our guides are experts. They know where to ride, where to eat, etc.. That resource simply does not exist when you do it on your own.

Global Rescue: We enrol everyone on the trip in a worldwide extraction service in case of emergency. We don't fool around when it comes to ensuring your safety. We get you to where you need to go immediately.

Bike issues: Our guide and support vehicle driver are very capable mechanics and will fix anything on the road, to ensure you are actually riding and not having to fix a problem on your vacation.

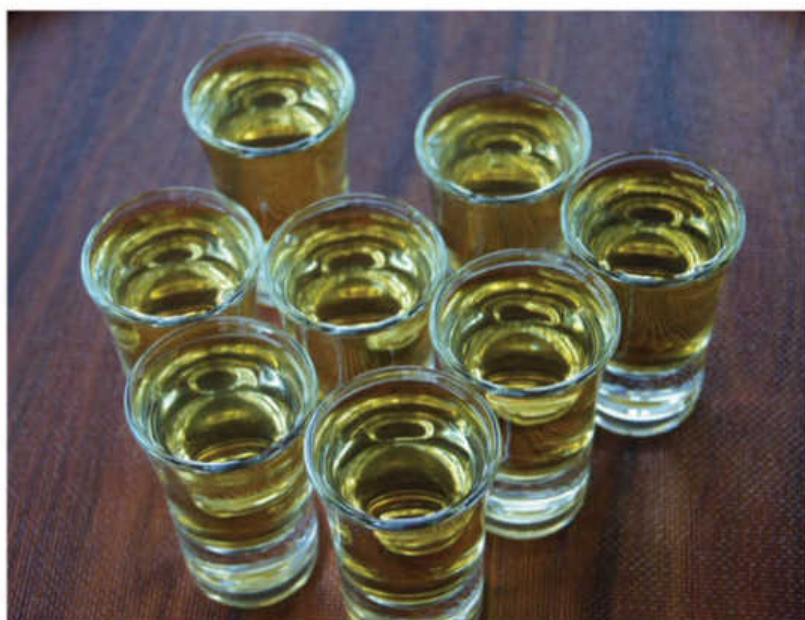
Support Vehicle: We have a pick-up along with the trip, carrying all the luggage and any extra people. The vehicle is driven by a mechanic. I don't even know how to quantify how important this is to make the trip run smoothly.

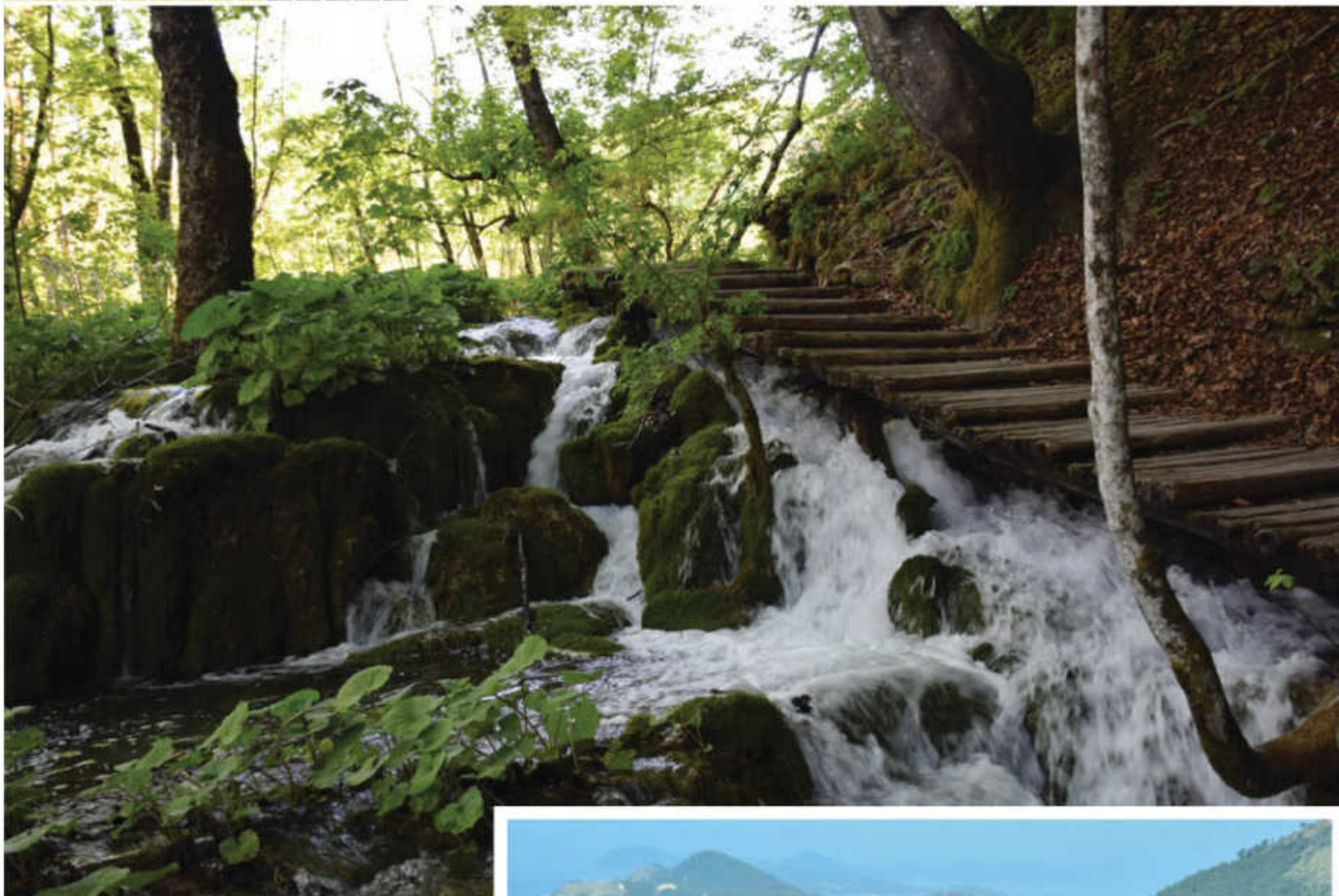
Life is short. Make the most of every moment. You will enjoy the journey of a lifetime, while MotoQuest takes care of the details.



many Norwegian roads I had not previously been able to tackle – especially Trollstigen. The scenery was outstanding, the route was perfectly chosen and the strawberry cake was... well, let's let that one go! We had pretty good weather, something that is not necessarily guaranteed on Norway's

Clockwise from main: "The best" doesn't always mean the best surface! A good tour operator will warn you about problematic roads, such as difficult dirt, and usually give you an alternative. But prepare to be stretched a little. / You might even find yourself learning something about equipment. Here, the American tour group demonstrates how useful our MOTORCYCLIST neck tubes can be when it's hot. / Of course breakfast isn't the only meal of the day. This is what lunch looks like in the ex-Yugoslavia, on the Adriatic tour. / Roads aren't the only things you'll discover. At one of our hotels in Norway with Edelweiss, the host introduced us to the super-smooth local akvavit before dinner. / It's unlikely that you would ever find some of the brilliant overnight stops that I have experienced on tours, like this one on the Med with Adriatic.





Above and right: I had been in the area twice before, but I had never done the walk through Plitvice National Park. I did it with Adriatic. I You meet some great people, too. He might look like a respectable veterinarian, but Peter is actually... no, wait, he is a respectable veterinarian. That's Dubrovnik in the background.

west coast. You can't count on sunshine at any time of year. It doesn't matter if it rains, though; I found myself riding through the spray from a lot of waterfalls anyway!

In August it was time for my own tour (Bear's Best of the West) with Great American Motorcycle Touring. To set up the tour I took one of Steven B. "Skip" Schippers' tours and added a few touches of my own. Skip will continue to use most if not all of them, I think. Sadly our lunch with Craig Vetter, the designer of the X75 Triumph Hurricane, was not to be – Craig was hit by a deer a couple of days before the event and spent five weeks in intensive care. He's getting better now! Despite that, the tour was a real thrill with a chance to see some of the western USA's most stirring sights and ride the most interesting roads.



So what I thought I'd do is illustrate why I like and recommend organised tours. The photos show some examples from the tours I took.

Adriatic Moto Tours,
www.adriaticmototours.com

Edelweiss Bike Travel,
www.edelweissbike.com

Great American Motorcycle Touring, www.gamct.com ●

With thanks

I took part in the tours above as a guest of the operators, and I thank them sincerely. If anyone sees that as a conflict of interests, I'm sorry. Keep in mind that the tour operator is taking a chance: if they screw up along the way, you will read about it in these pages! They can buy my attendance, they can't buy my words.

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TRIUMPH THUNDERBIRD NIGHT STORM SPECIAL EDITION

THE PERFECT STORM

WORDS STUART WOODBURY PHOTOS NICK WOOD



It was a dark summer's night, when not even a mouse was stirring in the house. But then a thundering roar could be heard off in the distance and as it rumbled closer and closer it shook the foundations of every house, car and person it passed and left many cowering under their beds.

Triumph's Thunderbird Night Storm was on the prowl.

Based on the Triumph Thunderbird Storm, the Night Storm's Special Edition is just that bit more special. It takes the colour black to a whole other level - especially the paintwork. The tank and front guard feature a subtle

'ghost flames' effect in a two tone combination of Phantom Black and Silver Frost. This provides a restrained but distinctive sparkling finish, emphasised by a custom hand painted logo on the tank. The combination looks remarkably understated to the untrained eye, but those who see it,



Stuart is wearing an Rjays Platinum open face, Ugly Fish sunnies, Segura Retro jacket, Dririder Coolite gloves, Draggin jeans and the wrong shoes, again! Okay, it was a 40 degree day, but no excuse!

“ITS MASSIVE 107.1MM PISTONS PUMP OUT A TIDAL WAVE 156NM OF POUNDING TORQUE AT JUST 2950RPM. IF THAT DOESN'T GIVE YOU HEART FLUTTERS, I DON'T KNOW WHAT WILL”

will be impressed. We had several people ask us how to achieve that look – couldn't help them, unfortunately.

Housed in the frame of this “perfect storm” is Triumph's big bore 1700cc parallel twin. Our test bike had the shorty accessory mufflers fitted and the beat these twin pipes exude

thunders so hard, your heart will skip a couple of beats! Its massive 107.1mm pistons pump out a tidal wave 156Nm of pounding torque at just 2950rpm. If that doesn't give you heart flutters, I don't know what will.

Stopping such a heart pounder is pretty important, so the braking is

taken care of by twin 310mm discs and Nissin 4-piston calipers on the front as well as a single 310mm disc and a Brembo 2-piston caliper on the rear. Both setups offer plenty of power. ABS is fitted as standard.

Sitting on the Night Storm might be a bit intimidating at first, but you will find that it is quite comfy. The seat is relatively low at 700mm, but this height hasn't come at the expense of comfort. The seat's padding is thick and supportive, so long distances will be nice on this big bruiser. The wide drag handlebar is a nice width for easy manoeuvrability, too.

Handling is neutral and the Storm is relaxing to ride. The twin rear shocks have five levels of preload adjustment, so depending on what you carry, there's plenty of adjustment to cope.

Accessories from Triumph are plentiful. Our test bike had the shorty

mufflers, leather tank cover and the single seat rack. However there are plenty more so that you can really personalise your Night Storm and turn it into precisely the bike you want.

With this bike, Triumph has produced a big, impressive and subtly different cruiser that offers the look that buyers are generally looking for,

without sacrificing on-road ability and a pretty substantial fun factor. It definitely deserves consideration if you're shopping for a cruiser.

Meantime, watch out. Next time you hear thunder at night, listen a bit more closely. It could just be the Triumph Thunderbird Night Storm Special Edition pounding your way. ●



SPECS

TRIUMPH THUNDERBIRD NIGHT STORM SPECIAL EDITION

PRICE: \$22,990 (plus on-road charges)

WARRANTY: Two years,
unlimited distance

SERVICING INTERVALS: Every
10,000km or 12 months

ENGINE: Liquid-cooled parallel twin
cylinder, 4-stroke, DOHC, 4 valves
per cylinder

BORE x STROKE: 107.1 x 94.3mm

DISPLACEMENT: 1699cc

COMPRESSION: 9.7:1

POWER: 72kW @ 5200rpm

TORQUE: 156Nm @ 2950rpm

TRANSMISSION: 6-speed, wet
multi-plate clutch, belt final drive

SUSPENSION: Front, 47mm telescopic
fork, non-adjustable, travel 120mm.

Rear, twin-shock, adjustable preload,
travel 95mm.

DIMENSIONS: Seat height 700mm,
weight 308kg (dry), fuel capacity
22 litres, wheelbase 1615mm

TYRES: Front, 120/70/R19.

Rear, 200/50/R17

FRAME: Tubular steel

BRAKES: Front, twin 310mm discs
with four-piston ABS calipers. Rear,
310mm disc, dual-piston ABS caliper.

FUEL CONSUMPTION: 7.2l litres
per 100km, premium unleaded

THEORETICAL RANGE: 305km

COLOURS: Phantom Black and
Silver Frost

VERDICT: THUNDER
DOWN UNDER

MANOEUVRES

MAY THE FLOODS BE WITH YOU (NOT)



What with the fires and floods, things are looking pretty rough for people on the land at the moment. As usual, once the emergency has died down, I'd like to encourage you to visit the affected areas and see if you can pump a few dollars into the local economy. As well as that kind of solid help, the people affected need to know that they haven't been forgotten.

FIX THAT BRAKE

Time for the next distribution of goodies. This time I've got a strange little gadget called a Brakefix. That's a good name for it, because that's exactly what it does – it fixes your brake when applied. Use is very simple, as you can probably see from the photo. The Brakefix simply holds your brake lever on.

Now I can see some objections to this – if you leave it on too long it's probably not going to do the seals of a disc brake a lot of good – but for a few minutes or hours it should be fine. The best use for it is probably on a scooter without a parking brake, or on an outfit.

Whatever: I've got one here, and if you'd like it you should drop me a note by mid-March. This issue will have been on the stands for about a month then. Distributor is ProAccessories, ProAccessories.com.au or 07 3277 0693.

WALCHA WALKUP

As you know, we try to keep the Bear Army as unlike a real army as we possibly can. So there is no need to report, or to commit yourself or really much of anything else. When we get together, we get together – and if someone doesn't then that's their business.

So if you like you can just walk in to our next "official" manoeuvres in Walcha, although you should book your accommodation. Both the manoeuvres this year are in NSW, which I know is a bit unfair to our more remote Troopers. So next year I'll try to arrange at least one in South Australia, or very near there. Any suggestions? Your ideas are always welcome.

At ease,



Commanding Officer,
Bear Army

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LEFT TURN, RIGHT TURN!

WHICH IS YOUR BAD SIDE? **WORDS** KEITH CODE

Keith Code is known around the world for his riding instruction work with his 'California Superbike Schools' and he has coached many top level motorcycle racers, as well as thousands of everyday riders. We thought this explanation about the way many riders find it easier to go round left, or right, hand corners was useful and thought you'd find it interesting too. SW

Scores of riders have sheepishly questioned me about a particularly perplexing problem: why they struggle more making either right or left turns. It turns out that many riders have this fear, and it's frustrating. Imagine that half your turns are hampered by an

unknown, seemingly unapproachable anxiety having no apparent source and no apparent reasoning behind it. Imagine you feared right turns and you lived in Nebraska where the only curves were highway clover-leaves? Or you were a dirt-track racer who couldn't turn left?

So-called "unidirectional phobia" - the perceived inability to make either right or left turns comfortably - isn't evidence of a mysterious brain malfunction. There are many reasons a rider might suffer from this problem: a mental scar from crashing on one side or the other; confusion over the mechanics of counter steering; or just a simple lack of

practice. Fortunately, there are actual technical solutions to this problem.

Confidence with steering in any direction all begins with being a "good passenger" on your own motorcycle. What does a good passenger do? Nothing - they just sit there and enjoy the ride, following, not countering, the motions of the bike. A bad passenger counters the bike's movements, staying rigidly upright when the bike leans, pushing the bike away in corners instead of moving in harmony with it, unintentionally countering the intended steering and cornering motions. How do you fix this tendency in yourself?



Pushing the bike down and away to steer might seem intuitive - probably because it maintains the body's normally correct, upright relationship to the planet and its gravitational force. But the more you try to remain upright, the more lean angle is required to get through a turn, which lessens your control and increases the possibility of a crash. Why struggle when you can counter this adverse effect by simply following the bike while you turn it? This might even feel better to you and improve your confidence and control of the bike. There is also a good possibility that this will open the door to conquering your directional fear, whichever form that may take.

Simple parking-lot manoeuvres can tell you a lot about how you turn. Find a parking lot and do a quick side-to-side steering manoeuvre. Is the motion jerky, using brute force

to stuff the bike underneath you, instead of using efficient counter steering technique to get the bike to smoothly change direction? You may also notice a hitch or rigidity in your body as you approach what you consider maximum lean, or an exaggerated movement at the hips, or some other attempt to keep the body upright. A general tenseness in the body is common when a rider isn't comfortable on the bike.

Practice alone isn't enough to resolve the matter. Because our natural tendency is to maintain an upright orientation to the world, it feels correct to turn a motorcycle that way. For this reason, ask a friend to observe you turning in and offer suggestions; even better, hire a good riding coach. I can assure you that the bad side will be more obvious to your coach than to you.

Think carefully about your

connection to the bike. Keep your upper body loose. Relax your shoulders, and drop your elbows until your forearms are level with the tank. Sit back a few inches, move your head one helmet width toward the inside, and point into the corner with your chin. Get comfortable in the fully crouched position; make yourself one with the fuel tank. Practice correct cornering technique in a parking lot, led by proper counter steering that uses palm pressure, not muscle strength, to turn, reinforced with your body following the natural motion of the bike.

By the way, if you find yourself in this unidirectional category of rider, count your blessings. Some riders have bidirectional phobia, and it's only by their force of will and love of freedom that they persist in riding at all! ●

STUART'S BEST ROAD – *OVERSEAS*

QUEENSTOWN TO GLENORCHY, NEW ZEALAND

WORDS STUART WOODBURY **PHOTOS** JEFF CROW & STUART





The Bear has begun giving you his best motorcycle roads of the North, South, East and West, but many of you have been wondering what my favourite roads are. Well, I'll give you my best road overseas in this issue, and my favourite road in Australia in the next issue.

THE overseas road, (being one of the most picturesque and fun roads anywhere) runs from Queenstown to Glenorchy in New Zealand, or the other way.

The road to Glenorchy and back is not very long – 44km each way – but for a morning blast out from Queenstown for a coffee and back, it provides a leisurely couple of hours... or, if you want to blow away the cobwebs, a somewhat shorter time.

QUEENSTOWN

Queenstown is a resort town and an adrenaline junkie's paradise in Otago in the south-west of Unzud's South Island.

and Lake Wanaka). The region is home to about 32,400 lucky people. Neighbouring towns include Arrowtown, Glenorchy, Kingston, Wanaka, Alexandra, and Cromwell – all great rides to visit! The nearest cities are Dunedin and Invercargill. Queenstown is now known for its highly commercial tourist business, especially adventure and ski tourism. Because of the snow that does fall, you'll only be able to ride the



Both Alana and I love Queenstown in New Zealand. In another life we could probably live there. Waking up to look at The Remarkables everyday would never get old and neither would having the picturesque Queenstown to Glenorchy road nearby with its tight turns, top class bitumen and a view along Lake Wakatipu all the way to Glenorchy and back. You will feel like you've died and have been taken to a land of riding magic!

It is built around an inlet called Queenstown Bay on Lake Wakatipu, a long thin Z-shaped lake formed by glacial processes, and has spectacular views of nearby mountains such as The Remarkables, Cecil Peak, Walter Peak and just above the town, Ben Lomond and Queenstown Hill.

The Queenstown-Lakes District has a land area of 8704.97 square kilometres not counting its inland lakes (Lake Hāwea, Lake Wakatipu,

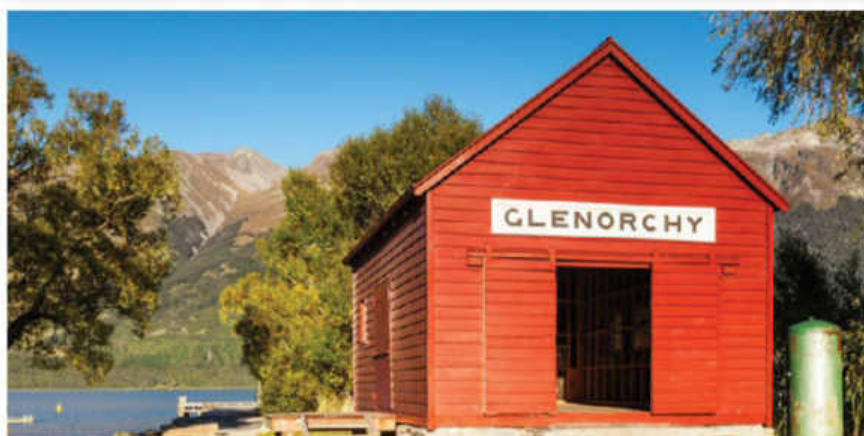
Queenstown-Glenorchy road in the warmer months.

GLENORCHY

Glenorchy is an outdoor enthusiast's paradise. Walkers, photographers, adventurers, all kinds of holiday makers have found themselves captivated by the amazing wilderness and the southern Kiwi way of life. Glenorchy Information Centre is located in the main street,



Top to bottom: Which way will you go? / Looking back at The Remarkables. / The Boat Shed at Glenorchy / Queenstown



Mull Street, as part of the historic Glenorchy Hotel. It is well worth stopping and getting all sorts of information about the town and area. Glenorchy is also the last stop before

the world famous Routeburn, Rees/Dart and Greenstone/Caples walking tracks within the Mt Aspiring and Fiordland National Parks. If you have the time to park the bike and explore on

foot, this is the place to do it.

The bitumen runs out at the end of Glenorchy – less than a kilometre from when you arrive in the town centre, so if you’ve got an adventure bike, or don’t mind getting your road bike dirty, you can continue on into the forest where some scenes from *The Lord of the Rings* were filmed. I will not spoil it for you, but if you’ve watched the films, you’ll well and truly know when you’ve arrived at one particular part – it is an eerie feeling.

TOURISTS

Because the Queenstown-Glenorchy road is so picturesque you get loads of tourists. It’s one consideration to keep in the front of your mind when burning around some of the turns. There is the possibility that you’ll have a campervan on your side of the road coming straight at you, or a rental car that’s parked “wherever” they like in the middle of the road, because they wanted to take a photo of the scenery.

But, for the most part, if you plan it right, you’ll feel like you’re the only one on the road. I will go as far to say that the Queenstown-Glenorchy road can feel like an out of body experience, because you get lost and consumed by the scenery and the road.

I can guarantee that like anything you love, you’ll want to do this road over and over again. I’ve done it three times and could ride it every day for the rest of my life and still be laughing out loud – “HOW GOOD IS THIS!” ●



WEST IS BEST

THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT MARGARET RIVER WORDS/PHOTOS THE BEAR

New York might be so good they named it twice, but the south-western tip of our continent is so good we needed two maps to show it to you. For anyone who hasn't been there, and even for those who have, this is serious competition for anywhere overseas. And we're only looking at the coast; there are amazing things to see and do inland, as well.

It might be tempting to begin this ride at Dunsborough, but take the extra time to ride up to Cape Naturaliste with its lighthouse – and lighthouse museum. From here it's south all the way, first back to

Dunsborough and then on the Caves Road. This is one of two roads that run north to south down this axe-shaped peninsula, but the other one – the Bussell Highway – is straighter and less interesting. Mind you, it's fun to ride as well and you could always come back that way.

The Caves Road is named after the many caves in the limestone of the Naturaliste-Leeuwin Ridge. Lake Cave, one of the most interesting, is well worth a stop. But that's further down the road. One peculiarity of the Caves Road is that, despite running parallel to the coast it isn't actually on the coast. Narrow strips of national

park take the prize locations. If you want to see the mighty waves of the Indian Ocean, you need to leave the road and take one of the spur roads to the west.

The first place where you might like to do this is Just south of Yallingup, where the same turn to the right will take you to either the famous Smiths Beach or the impressive Canal Rocks – or both. The vineyards start a bit further south, and almost all of them seem to have cellar doors. The spurs down to the coasts are mainly dirt from here to Cowaramup Bay Road, but that's a bit misleading.



They are actually a combination of sand – usually not very deep, thank the gods – with limestone. Watch this stuff; it sometimes forms ridges that can chop up your tyres in short order.

Cowaramup Bay Road is tarred and will take you to Gracetown, a pretty little place on the coast. The next turnoff, Ellensbrook Road, goes to – guess where? Right, that man back there behind the T-shirt rack, Ellensbrook Homestead. This is one of the pioneering buildings in the area and is worth a stop. Check with the tourist office in Margaret River, www.westernaustralia.com/Margaret.River or 08 9780 5911, for opening hours.

The turn to Margaret River township is actually next, but to the left. It's a seriously touristy place, but it's not hard to find some good

coffee or a meal. When you're heading back to the Caves Road, keep going down to Prevelly, which has a small Greek-style church on the ridge overlooking a spectacular bay just made for windsurfing.

Back on the Caves Road you continue south through agricultural land – some more wineries, too, as well as craft shops – and then you're in the National Park. Lake Cave is just down a little way on the right, and you are now riding through a substantial forest. Don't be fooled, though; all of this area was clear-felled and these trees are secondary growth. I think most of them are tuart, but I'm a cave bear not a tree bear so I'm not sure. These days of course the trees are protected by the park.

The next major road junction is the T-intersection where a road

leads off to the left to Karridale and the beginning of the Brockman Highway. If you're in a hurry to get to the other forests further east then this is the road to take. If you're not, keep straight on but then take the road to the west to Hamelin Bay. The remains of one of the old wharves used to ship out timber remains on the beautiful beach. Double back to Caves Road now and continue south past Jewel Cave to the junction with the Bussell Highway and the end of the Caves Road. From here it's only a few kilometres to Augusta and on to Cape Leeuwin, where you can climb the lighthouse and see the meeting of the Indian and Southern oceans.

The Caves Road might be a bit rough in places – it sees a bit of truck traffic – and it's a shame that there aren't ocean views all along, but it's still a wonderful road for a bike. ●

HOME & AWAY

COMPILED BY THE BEAR

The figures are clear about the fact that more Australians are heading overseas for bike tours, while more and more are also getting out on their bikes back home. Operators, if you're interested in reaching our very travel-wise readership, drop me a line at thebear@ausmotorcyclist.com.au.

Since this is the issue which features our annual report on organised motorcycle tours (elsewhere in the magazine), this is a good time to introduce our new style for this section. It's going to be focused on tours, often in the words of the operators themselves. This is a good way of passing on information directly to you, and when we've got it, we can feature the advertising that relates to organised travel right here with the editorial. A one stop shop.





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IMTBIKE has been organizing motorcycle tours & rentals in Europe and Morocco for nearly 20 years. It has the largest fleet of rental BMWs in Europe with over 140 new model Beemers, fully equipped with luggage. It has 8 rental centres in: Barcelona, Madrid, Malaga, Seville, Valencia, Bilbao, Santiago and Lisbon, Portugal. IMTBIKE is an Official Partner of BMW Motorrad so whenever you rent a motorcycle or tour with IMTBIKE you enjoy preferential treatment in all BMW dealerships. It also has the BMW International Tourguide Academy (ITA) certification.

IMTBIKE is known for using only the best hotels, Paradors and Pousadas, which are historical castles, palaces and fortresses converted into modern hotels full of character. They are magical places and also have

the best chefs, showcasing the local gastronomy in each region. And let's not forget that these hotels are all very motorcycle friendly!

New for 2016, IMTBIKE will be adding three new tours to the calendar: the "MotoGP Valencia Tour," the "Morocco & Southern Spain Tour" and a new Global Tour, "Alaska Untamed".

"From rider to rider," says Scott from IMTBIKE, "if you are passionate about motorcycles and you're looking for an unforgettable riding experience, fantastic routes and a vacation that will leave you with a lifetime of memories, look no further, IMTBIKE has it all!"

I will be able to give you a full report on IMTBIKE's services later this year. I'm going on their Northern Green Spain tour in June. Couldn't resist it; I've seen the edge of this country and have wanted to go back and ride more of it, ever since.

"The tour starts in Santiago de Compostela, a Galician city famous for the "Camino de Santiago" (St. James'

Way) pilgrimage," says Scott. "Galicia is famous for its verdant rolling mountains and seafood rich coast. You will ride through the provinces of Asturias, Cantabria and the Basque Country and experience the perfect blend of Northern Spain's rugged coastline and the majestic "Pico de Europa" Mountains. Two nights in elegant San Sebastian will give you time to enjoy some pintxos and Txakoli, Basque tapas and white wine.

"Time for more mountain riding as you head to Oviedo and then back to the Atlantic Ocean and Las Rias Baixas. The last riding day will be spectacular as you wind up the coast along cliffs and breaking surf back to Santiago. Mark this one in your bucket list as one of the greatest motorcycle adventures you will ever have!"

I mean, seriously... how could you keep a Bear away from that?

For more information on IMTBIKE's tours and rentals, see www.imtbike.com.



ADVENTURE IS AT YOUR DOOR

Good news on the local front, here in Australia. Experienced adventure rider David Squires,

and his daughter Felicity (24) have teamed up to launch Outback Adventure Tours of the Barossa Valley and Flinders Ranges in South Australia. That's an interesting and welcome choice of destinations.

David reckons that there are thousands of riders out there who own road bikes and who would love to try adventure riding. The trouble is, they don't want to buy another bike before they know if they will like it - or perhaps they want their choice confirmed before they buy.

To help them out, he and Felicity are giving these riders the chance to have a real off-road adventure aboard new 650 Suzuki V-Stroms (one of which is a LAMS version) on guided tours of some of the best back roads, dirt trails and gravel tracks in the South Australian Outback.

Groups will be small, and riders can bring pillion. There will be a back-up vehicle in support which will be able to take passengers, too.

The tours will run on weekends and David will arrange for helmet cams and videos of each tour group. The itinerary is fantastic and anyone would enjoy what's in store for them. Lunch will be in scouted

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Call David Squire for more information on routes and requirements.



SA OUTBACK MOTORCYCLE ADVENTURES Telephone: 0437 016 366 Email: david.squire@hotmail.com

cafes and pubs; accommodation will be homestyle in bed and breakfast places offering dinner and continental breakfast.

Just in case you fling the bike away, David is a qualified first aider, and Felicity will be riding shotgun in the back-up vehicle equipped with proper communications.

Prices are reasonable: around \$660/day, including fuel, and \$440/day for a pillion.

David is a real people person and although he has set out great itineraries, they are not set in stone if you or your group have some other ideas about where you want to ride.

It sounds to us as if this is a wonderful opportunity for you if you have always wanted to try Adventure Riding in the Outback – or if it's just occurred to you! Contact David at david.squire@hotmail.com or on 0437 016 366, and get out there on those chookies! Even the bikes are what we'd choose if we were doing this ourselves...



ROMANIAN ROAD ROMANCE

Romania has a way of getting under your skin, according to tour operator MotoQuest. It might be the horse-drawn carts or the smiling children waving along the roadside.

It might be the epic roads or the communist legacy, which gives you the feeling you are lost in time. Or, it might be the legend of Dracula, the medieval towns, the Gothic or baroque architecture that sets you in a frame of elegance and history. It might even be the Red Bull



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Romaniacs Hard Enduro event.

Whatever it may be, there is a feeling one gets when one visits Romania. It is the future and the past all rolled into one. The enduring smiles of the people you meet, the cobblestone side streets of a medieval town, or the carpet of fir tree forests that engulf

you when riding through the countryside.

"Our trip to Romania has it all," reckons MotoQuest's Phil Freeman. "Classic European courtyards and outdoor cafes: check.

Humble agricultural scenes: got that one covered. Incredible roads: try the Transfagarasan and tell me that is not one of the top five roads in the world! On top of all of that is full blown, world-class moto excitement -- watching the Red Bull Romaniacs out of Sibiu is like no other motorized event. It is simply unbelievable and will leave a knobby studded mark across your memory banks for the rest of your life.

"So, you can come to Romania with us, but it will never fully leave you. Go there and get swept away in a current of history, humility and adrenaline!"

Check out the details at motoquest.com.



TREAT TIME

"It's time to treat yourself," says Moto Adventours. They have a new eight day tour starting on the 14th of May this year and they reckon it's touring with a difference.

"Join us on this unforgettable journey around northern Spain," their brochure says. "This tour starts and ends in Santiago de Compostela, the Spanish city known for the "St. James Way" pilgrimage, and takes in much of the northern coast of Spain as well as the mountains."

Take a look at www.motoadventours.com for more details and other tours.



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“Sicily has been on our company’s wish list ever since AMT owners, Matej & Martina, spent their family vacation there,” says AMT, “and were fascinated by the beauty of the island, the still very traditional culture, amazing cuisine and rich history with abundant architectural remains.

“From Palermo, riders will motor through the magical country side with hill -top villages on one side and Mt. Etna overlooking the island on the other. You will discover the ancient Greek temples of Agrigento, visit

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Indulge yourself in the magic of Sicily, discover grand European capitals or explore the always surprising sights, sounds and cuisines of the Balkans and the Adriatics.

Adriatic Moto Tours, a well-known operator of excellent motorcycle tours in the Balkans, Alps and Central Europe (I can vouch for them myself), is expanding its list of great motorcycle destinations. The new number one destination in 2016 is Sicily—an island of many faces and a million flavours.

the beautiful town of Taormina and her sister Syracuse, admire powerful Mt. Etna and head back west, stopping in medieval Cefalu for the night.

“To see this mesmerizing island from the top of a brand new BMW, Ducati, Suzuki or Yamaha is just the cherry on the top. We’ll ride in Sicily twice

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in 2016 - in May and in October. Welcome to a perfect 9 day vacation on two wheels!"

Beside the existing tours and this new one, Adriatic Moto Tours has expanded two of its most popular 15 day adventures by three days. The Beautiful Balkans Adventure will now include the amazing Kornati Islands (new tour name: Balkans and Adriatic Explorer), while the Czech Hungary Tour will add a stay in Austria's capital, Vienna, which means that you'll visit 'The Great Four' on that particular tour: Vienna, Budapest, Krakow and Prague (new tour name: Grand European Tour). For lovers of European history and great architecture or for seekers of unspoiled nature, great traditions and wonderfully delicious food, there's something for everyone.

See www.adriaticmototours.com for full details. They also have an impressive new brochure for 2016, as well, which you can order at info@adriaticmototours.com.



CHARLEY GOES WITH COMPASS

Charley Boorman has announced a collaboration with Compass Expeditions, one of the world's leading Adventure Bike Tour companies. Working with Compass Expeditions for the last four years offering adventure tours across Australia, Charley has been impressed with their professionalism, their spirit and their passion for motorcycles and motorcycle touring.

"Our adventure rides into the Outback and Tasmania have been so popular, we've now decided to use the same model in South America and Africa. Our groups just can't get enough and keep coming back for more. Compass has that adventure magic and I'm looking forward to 2016 as we ride across Australia again and, later in the year, South America and Africa." Charley said.

See www.compassexpeditions.com for more details.

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GO OR NOT GO?

I've had a phone call from a reader who prefers not to have her name mentioned, with a question that I'm sure others are asking themselves. She has been planning an overseas trip for a couple of years, taking in one of the places where innocent bystanders have been shot. Should she go ahead with her plans, or stay home?

That's not a question I can answer for someone else. But here's my attitude.

Depending on how you look at it, the

world can be a harsh place. But I have a John Wayne T-shirt with the message "Life's tough. But it's tougher if you're stupid". Use your head, and it's likely you will be okay.

There is no guarantee, but there is no guarantee at home either – what about those people who were hurt just recently when a car drove straight into a service station shop,

here in Sydney?

Use your head, check www.smarttraveller.gov.au for background information on the places you intend to visit, and then go have a good time. PT

How not to decorate your bike when touring Afghanistan.



HAPPY NY FROM EXMO

We received a somewhat unusual New Year's message from EXMO Tours.

"Like every year, we did the countdown and uncorked the champagne in the magical Carretera Austral, a paradise for every rider looking for thrills," it reads. "We are leading a group through the Chilean and Argentinean Patagonia and we will reach Tierra del Fuego, considered the end of the world.

"With this message we wish you a great 2016 and hope to give you many reasons to give yourself the motorcycle adventure you're dreaming about, either alone, two-up or with a group of passionate (sic) like you."

And what can we say but "amen"? ●



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GOIN' UP THE COUNTRY

**BABY DON'T YOU
WANT TO GO?**
WORDS/PHOTOS THE BEAR

"It's a funny old world," as W C Fields pointed out, "a man's lucky to get out of it alive." But I'd like to suggest that what is really important is to be alive while you're in the funny old world; unlike the people who never actually do much living. We all know them. They're too busy being what society expects them to be and doing what society expects them to do. Feel sorry for them by all means, but don't be them.

But why am I telling you this? Reading this magazine is probably all that's needed to select for the people who are not likely to fall into the trap. So maybe show this story,

about one of my favourite rides, to someone who needs to lighten up and take a selfie – time, not a photo.

As with W C Fields' world, you need to be lucky to get out of Sydney alive. I understand the argument that more freeways just mean more traffic, but in my opinion the Sydney basin would benefit from a couple of extra superslabs – or at least one, to bring the end of the Newcastle Freeway closer to the centre of the city. As it is, I take my life into my hands every time I head

“I’m going to where the water tastes like wine, We can jump in the water, stay drunk all the time.” **”**
Canned Heat

for its current beginning in Hornsby. Both the Pacific Highway, which switches its lanes around like a speed freak’s slot car set, and the Commemorative Parkway with its secret driveways and convenient radar emplacements, offer more danger than pleasure. Pennant Hills Road is a little better, but it’s no use if you’re coming from the south.

I know that using the freeway is kind of bugging out, but really it’s no contest when you’re getting away from Sydney. The only decent alternative is National Park, but that’s when you’re heading south. Otherwise it’s the superslab, except for the M5 where the tunnel is just too polluted for me.

Turn off to Berowra, where there is 24 hour fuel and the beginning of the Old Road just a couple of kilometres away. The speed limit on the Old Road is a pain, of course, but the RTA (now the RMS) is in a bind. There probably are too many crashes along here (especially motorcycles) and they really have just one tool to try to fix that – a speed limit reduction. You know what they say, when the only tool you have is a hammer, everything starts to look like a nail. That doesn’t make the speed limit any more enjoyable, but I guess it allows the Hornsby highway patrol to fatten the NSW government coffers a bit.

Pie in the Sky on the right has reasonably decent coffee, although the fruit pies are a bit gluggy. Beware on entry and exit; a lot of passing drivers and riders do not allow for slower traffic crossing the road or pulling out. The ride down the hill to the bridge is a lot of fun with a couple of challenging corners... but of course not at legal speed. Much the same could be said for the remainder of the run up to Mt White, where there is

also okay coffee at the Mt White Café (ex Road Warriors etc) on the right just after the turnoff back to the freeway. The bacon and egg rolls are passable too, in my opinion.

Carry on to Calga and take the Peats Ridge road north. This was once the main Pacific Highway, like the Old Road, and is surprisingly wide and well laid-out. Don’t get carried away; the speed limits are draconian and so is enforcement. At Peats Ridge, the Corrugated Café in the small group of shops on the right (again!) called Peats Ridge Village is popular with riders, mainly for the size of its meals.

A short way up the road is the left turn that will see you on George Downes Drive. This will take you north through Kulnura (not much there), The Letter A (even less), Bucketty (even less again, if that’s possible), Laguna (a neat little wine bar but no fuel anymore) and finally Wollombi with its famous pub, but no fuel. The road conditions vary. One of the curves has been named Lemming Corner because so many riders have followed others into a “crash-style situation”. Rumour has it that if you climb down the embankment here and collect shrapnel you will eventually be able to build an entire Harley-Davidson Softail... not including rider.

Carry on through Wollombi, although come to think of it this is a good opportunity to check out the bikes parked outside the pub. We’ve seen some interesting sleds here. But do carry on, eventually, and cross the new bridge over Wollombi Brook. What makes this a brook when all the other watercourses in the area are called creeks escapes me. And no, it is no more marshy than any of the creeks.

The road up to Paynes Crossing, finally all tarred, is wonderful with some nice, slightly deceptive corners and beautiful bucolic scenery. On its way up to Broke the scenery adds vineyards to become typically Hunter Valley but remains pleasant and relatively quiet except for a breed of typical Hunter Valley drivers in expensive and awesomely capable cars that they drive like Corollas. Fuel up in Broke if you need go-juice, and let me

know if you find my neon-green ear plugs which I lost at or near the servo when I left them on the pillion seat, instead of inserting them into my ears.

The run north past a monstrous open-cut coal mine or two to the junction with the Golden Highway is forgettable. Turn right into the highway, then left to Singleton. This is the northern end of the Putty Road, and it takes you just about straight to the largest sundial in the southern hemisphere. No, seriously. Although I can never work out how they decide this sort of thing. Perhaps there is an annual or biennial meeting of the International Sundial Association at which competing claims are assessed impartially.

“Well, it’s true that the one in Sao Paulo measures a foot more in circumference than the one in Singleton, but only if you count the footpath around it. Can’t do that, sorry, ruled out by the Diet of Abidjan in 1736... Singleton retains its title.”

Anyway, carry on straight ahead to the Gresford Road which takes you to (will wonders never cease) Gresford. Well, not exactly. In fact, the bridge over Glendon Brook is down and a bloke from the local Council assured me that it would be at least 18 months before it’s fixed. That was about three months ago as I write this, making it 2017. Not to worry, the diversion is well signposted and adds less than 20km to the ride. But you are no longer on Gresford Road as you head for Gresford; it’s Glendonbrook Road now. Continue to East Gresford where you turn left into Bingleburra Road (I think the signwriters up here must name the roads and be paid by the letter) to Dungog and eventually the

clockwise from top: Not sure that the water does taste like wine. / No toys at the Royal – this is the real thing. / Antipodean Tinker display. Want one! / It is gradually getting better. Be wary. / But don’t ever fall off the edge of the bridge. / Like the rest of Mark’s bikes, it’s a runner.



**"THE VALUE OF LIFE
CAN BE MEASURED
BY HOW MANY TIMES
YOUR SOUL HAS BEEN
DEEPLY STIRRED."**

SOICHIRO HONDA

Bucketts Way north of Stroud.

That name is not a misspelling, by the way. It does not refer to any buckets but comes from the Aboriginal name for the impressive vertical rock formations on your left just before you reach Gloucester. The road up there is sadly not exactly brilliant, although work is under way to improve it. Parts of it, like the curate's egg, are already excellent. Be aware on these bits especially that the highway patrol occasionally plays up here, and plays hard.

Gloucester is a nice town. I once mentioned in a story that a woman at one of the servos had given me a hard time for riding a motorcycle and thereby apparently making work for the local emergency services (huh?) and subsequently got a call from her boss, eager to sort out the matter. That kind of thing doesn't happen in many places.

Gloucester's main drag, Church Street, has three cafés practically next to each other: Roadies, with bikes and motorcycle memorabilia on display; Perenti, with interesting food; and Thunderbolt's, with pizza. Ahh... and the pub is across the road.

Gloucester is where you leave Bucketts and pick up Thunderbolt's Way – just turn left off Church Street and follow the signs. The road takes you through the hamlet (small settlement, not vacillating Danish prince) of Barrington and then turns right to head for the hills. And this, as the Goon Show used to proclaim, is where the story really starts...

Named after well-known bushranger Mr T. Way, this is almost a metaphor for life. Parts of it are good, parts are bad. Some parts are even sublime, with wonderful views, and yet others are diabolical. And you never know when it will change... Have fun, but

keep your wits about you. Like the Bucketts Way, work is being done on the road and heavy, wired-down rock coffers now protect the road from flooding and mud slides. If I'm to be perfectly honest I will have to admit that Thunderbolt's Way is still pretty ordinary, at least as far as the surface is concerned. But it's getting better.

A new concrete bridge has replaced the old one-lane timber crossing over the Manning River – a bit of a shame, of course, losing so much history, but really most welcome. Not much further up the hill on the right is the turnoff to the Bretti Reserve and (free) campground. This is a beautiful stretch of paddock by the Barnard River, and the view down from the road inspired my introductory quotation. The river is shallow on a stony bed, and definitely looks good enough to drink. Whether it is intoxicating I couldn't say, though.

Around about here you find yourself on the New England plateau; one day in winter I'm going to make the run up to Nowendoc and see what this all looks like under snow. It's still interesting country at any time, with some spectacularly twisted trees, tortured by the weather. At Carsons Pioneer Lookout you get some wonderful views over the Manning River Valley.

It's not much further now to the only source of fuel and supplies before Walcha, the Nowendoc Store. It reminds me a bit of some of the lonely stores in remote parts of the American plains; it is set among a few closed-looking buildings and is tucked away into itself. There's nothing but a bench and a couple of pumps outside, unless you look around the corner where you'll find a table and some chairs under the small trees. The bloke who runs the store is friendly and I tend to stop here whether I need fuel or not, for a cold drink or a quick snack.

A little further along there's the option of turning off to the left to Tamworth by way of Topdale Road and the twists and turns of the very narrow road over Ports Stephens Gap. The shire should have finished the tar sealing of the first few kilometres by now. About a dozen kilometres in,

there is a turnoff to the left to Nundle, but much of this is forestry road and I doubt if any of it is sealed. I haven't tackled it for some years – the last time

Storm "und Drang"

.....

In case you didn't recognise it from our test elsewhere in these pages, the bike I rode on this excursion was a Triumph Night Storm Special Edition. The term "king of the road" comes easily to mind when you're aboard this bike. Yes, it costs nearly 23 gorillas but it is hard to argue with the price. The quality is outstanding – the "ghost flames" paintwork alone was enough to convince me of that. Add the significant improvement in Triumph build quality and you have a desirable motorcycle already. All without the thunder of the 1700cc parallel twin engine, something closer to a force of nature than a mechanical device.

When I do a reasonable distance like the 1200-odd kilometres I covered in the two days I had on this bike, comfort is actually at least as important as performance. After all, I like a bit of "go" on the road, but I also like being able to "walk" when I get off. The Night Storm is comfortable enough to make a tourer, not just a cruiser. Ergonomics are excellent, the seat is pleasantly low and even suspension and handling are more than, er, bearable. No improvement is necessary, which is really saying something for me, Mr Aftermarket Seat And Suspension himself.

Does Triumph make a touring version of this bike? Not as such? It would make a good basis for one – actually, maybe just throwovers on the back...

was on a Moto Guzzi Le Mans 4. Now there's a memory to conjure with.

Walcha is the next stop, back on Thunderbolt's Way. There are few more pleasant places in Australia. For a start, two outstanding motorcycle roads cross here – Thunderbolt's Way and the Oxley Highway. The town itself has a relaxed, open look and offers all the services you could want including pubs, a good Chinese restaurant and an IGA. And one of the paramedics attached to the ambulance station is a motorcyclist. I first met her at a Horizons Unlimited gathering, and now know that if I crash around Walcha I'll be in good hands.

But there is more to Walcha. More than you'll find in any other town in Australia, I'd suggest.

First there's the motorcyclist-owned Royal Café B&B. Built as a pub, it offers reasonably priced and very pleasant accommodation upstairs and a convivial lounge, large dining room and shady "beer" garden downstairs. Motorcycle parking is either in a locked yard or an equally locked shed.

What makes it so amazing is that all

of the rooms, hallways and even the garden are filled with antiques and drawings and sculptures by Brad, the husband of host Toni. Brad would have to be one of the most talented and yet relaxed and genial artists I've ever met. He's also a gun mechanic, able to create complete bikes (mainly Harleys) from piles of parts in his garage. A man worth knowing, and a rare find.

But, no offence to Brad, there is an even more amazing bloke in Walcha. A couple, really.

Mark and Erika run a tidy, small gallery just up the road from the Royal Café. The Antipodean Tynker is not just a gallery; it also offers coffee! On one wall is a display of Erika's work. She makes small metal boxes, but not just any boxes. She makes the lot, including superbly fitting hinges which help to make the boxes into works of art. Frankly, I found it difficult to imagine anything precious enough to put into one of them. Maybe you'd just have the box, and not worry about any contents at all.

Keeping Erika's artful boxes, her work desk and a couple of café tables and chairs company is a small selection of motorcycles. These are not, however, ordinary motorcycles. They're not even extraordinary motorcycles. They are probably the most amazing bikes I have ever seen.

Mark has built them himself. And not, with one exception, from existing parts. He has turned, milled, welded and shaped everything himself. It's as if each of the bikes is a prototype; a hand-made prototype for some kind of steampunk-like future. I won't even try to describe the bikes, and the photos do not do them justice. There are motorcycle museums and displays all over Australia – hell, all over the world. But there is nothing even remotely like this. Oh, and of course – they all run. This is not some kind of sterile futuristic art project. These are real working bikes. I couldn't help asking if Mark makes the piston rings himself; you may recall that this was what stymied even the great Soichiro Honda. He does.

Walcha

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*One of Mark's bikes
– our opener.*

You may have seen one of Mark's machines at Juan's café in Dorrigo. It's the 3 litre Ned Kelly bike with the Kelly helmet "fairing", which now sits in the window of The Antipodean Tynker. Impressive as it is, even this does not show you just how skilled and detail-minded Mark is. The delicate work on some of the other bikes will show you that quickly enough.

I know I'm beginning to sound a little hysterical here, but let me remind you

that Soichiro Honda once said that "The value of life can be measured by how many times your soul has been deeply stirred". The value of my life has been increased markedly by that little gallery in Walcha.

You can go home the way you came, or preferably take the Oxley Highway down to Wauchope. Unfortunately you are then pretty much stuck with the Pacific Highway on your way home. If you can't face that, head west to

Bendemeer and then down the New England Highway. That's not so bad. You can stop in at the Powerhouse Bike Museum in Tamworth, for a spectacular view of motorcycling's past. And have one of the excellent hamburgers at Wallabadah on the way.

Up the country. That's the place to go.

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Email - antipodeantynker@gmail.com

Opening hours: Friday to Sunday, 9am to 2pm

Check Erika's Facebook site to see one of the bikes running. ●

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DARLING RIVER RUN

ONE OF AUSTRALIA'S GREAT
OUTBACK ADVENTURES

WORDS/PHOTOS ROBERT CRICK



"You talkin' to me?" (Photo: Outback
Regional Tourism Organisation)

The Darling River Run, following the river from its source in northern NSW to its meeting with the Murray at Wentworth in southern NSW, is one of Australia's most notable Outback motorcycling adventures.

For me, it also continued my efforts to trace the steps of my great grandfather William Crick who carried mail from Wentworth to Wilcannia on horseback and ran a paddle steamer and wool barge along the Darling. This was after his mail runs along the Murray River whose tracing I wrote about in "Following the Mail Run" in Australian Motorcyclist No 7, September 2013.

PLANS AND PREPARATIONS

It had long been an ambition to do I had raised the idea of doing the Darling River Run as a sequel to "Following the Mail Run" with a friend some time back. But let it linger for a couple of years before it finally took more tangible shape, in part spurred by Stuart's write-up and map in Australian Motorcyclist No 30,

August 2015, of a NSW Outback loop that included a section of the Darling Run.

It wasn't long before five of us were committed to do it while the windows were open. The hint of rain closes all the roads partly because they become

treacherous when wet.

It's also partly to avert the trouble and expense of rescue missions and extensive road repairs. In summer, the oppressive heat means that a lot of the tourist facilities pack up.

We figured it was not just a ride, although that part was paramount, and approached with a mix of excitement and wariness: "there's lots of thick bulldust," according to advice from the Bourke Shire. Taking on the Darling River Run, however, is also about the folklore of the river: its early history, its role in opening up Outback Australia, its seductive lure to discover the mysteries of the early pioneers and the indigenous people who were nourished by it for

many thousands of years before the Overlanders and paddle steamers.

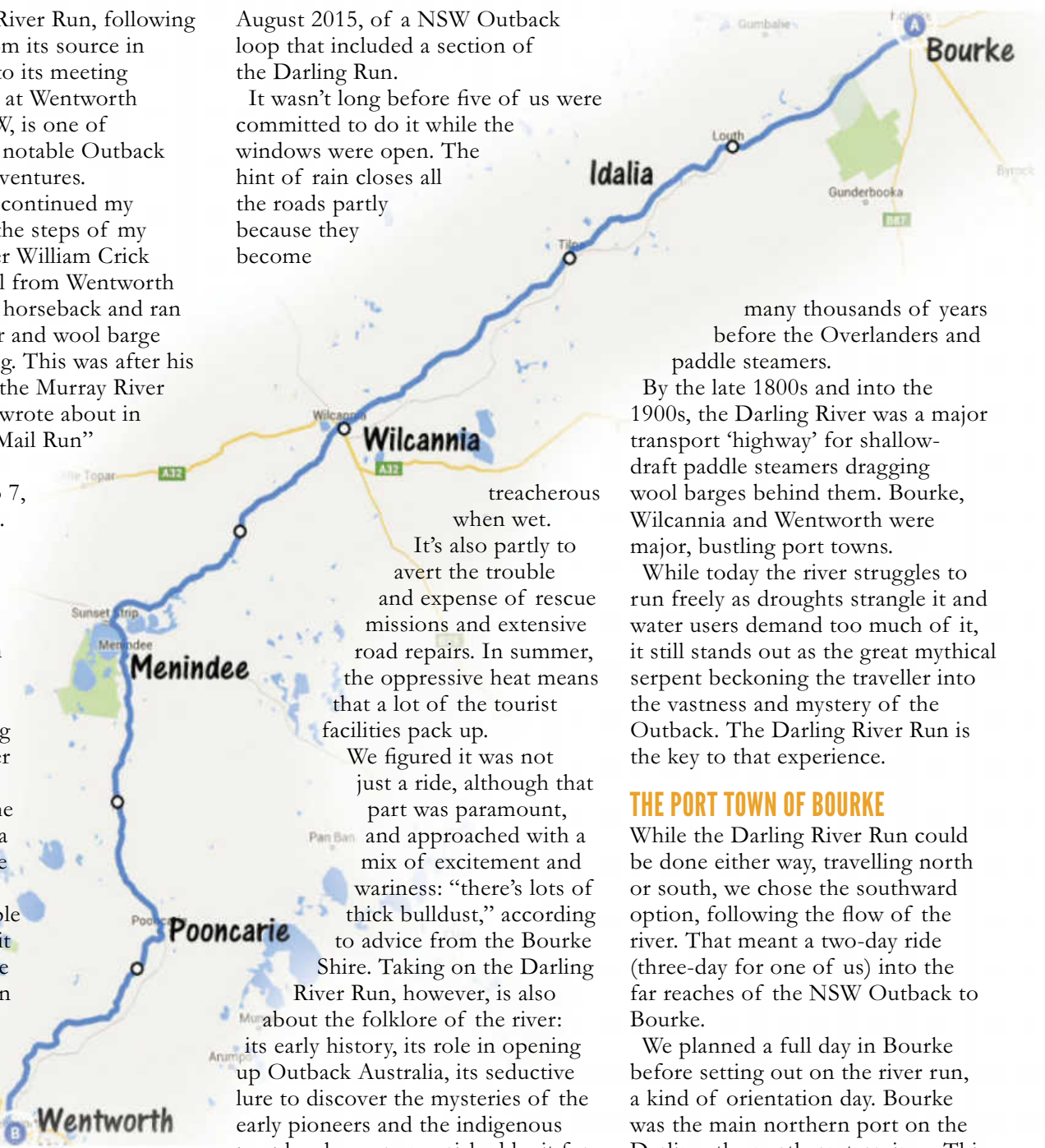
By the late 1800s and into the 1900s, the Darling River was a major transport 'highway' for shallow-draft paddle steamers dragging wool barges behind them. Bourke, Wilcannia and Wentworth were major, bustling port towns.

While today the river struggles to run freely as droughts strangle it and water users demand too much of it, it still stands out as the great mythical serpent beckoning the traveller into the vastness and mystery of the Outback. The Darling River Run is the key to that experience.

THE PORT TOWN OF BOURKE

While the Darling River Run could be done either way, travelling north or south, we chose the southward option, following the flow of the river. That meant a two-day ride (three-day for one of us) into the far reaches of the NSW Outback to Bourke.

We planned a full day in Bourke before setting out on the river run, a kind of orientation day. Bourke was the main northern port on the Darling: the northern terminus. This



would be the starting point of our Darling River Run as it was for the paddle steamers of old. A visit to the Back O'Bourke Exhibition Centre gave us a good insight into the history, challenges and people of Bourke and the Outback.

An hour's cruise along the Darling in a replica of the 1890 paddle steamer Jandra (but without the steam) gave a good appreciation of the river and its banks from the perspective of the crews and passengers of the old paddle steamers that towed the wool barges from Bourke to Wentworth and beyond to the rail heads and ports.

OUR ROUTE FOR THE RUN

Between Bourke and Wentworth there are roads and tracks along both sides of the Darling. There are also opportunities to cross the river in at least six places on the 730km ride. Subject to getting the latest road information as we travelled, we set out with an expectation of starting on the eastern side (some sources call it the southern side – the river flows south-west), changing to the western (or northern) side at Louth, back to the eastern side from Tilpa to Wilcannia and onto Pooncarie, then changing back to the western side for the last section into Wentworth (and thus avoiding the bitumen from

Pooncarie). By splitting up a couple of times, we even managed to spread ourselves over both sides at places.

BOURKE TO IDALIA

We planned to take four days to follow the river south-west to Wentworth. Our first day was a 145km ride to one of the historic sheep stations of the region: Idalia.

The homestead and its visitors' camping area are right beside the river. The high western bank has so far protected the homestead from the gigantic floods of the Darling – with the help of a levee around the homestead.

It was a pleasant relief to have set up camp and relax with some warm red wine from a cask bladder that had survived on the back of the bike. Now it was time to reminisce about the day's ride.

It had begun propitiously enough with a firmly based gravel road that started shortly after turning onto the Wilcannia road not far from Bourke. But that didn't last long. The road rapidly transformed itself into red, powdered gravel – something of a mix of sand and bulldust – that moved the bike in ways that made your stomach knot involuntarily.

Wilcannia to Menindee. / Bridge at Wilcannia. / Sheep yards, Idalia. / Darling above Bourke. / Memories at Menindee. / Shindy's at Louth.



Discharging Wool at Bourke 1895-38 Kerry Photo Sydney
Photograph by Charles Kerry Studio, about 1900. Tyrrell Collection, Powerhouse Museum, Sydney. 85/1284-753, 00g01998





rapidly changing road surfaces. A lot of the road was the black soil of the Darling flood plains which was mostly firmly packed. The sharply contrasting sections of red soil seemed more prone to rapid deterioration, and were already showing signs of turning into bulldust.

Then, somewhat

consoling, there were a few stretches of well-groomed gravel road.

Louth, a tiny town on the east bank of the river, had been a welcome lunch stop with its much talked-about Shindy's Inn.

We crossed the river to the western side at Louth and the ride to Idalia station meant even worse road surfaces. We encountered and survived – pretty much – several kilometres of powder-fine grey dust, sometimes gathered in long sections created by the grinding of road train wheels.

The distances on paper might seem benign but for most of us – not all accomplished dirt or sand riders – the day was demanding.

IDALIA TO WILCANNIA

It was back on yesterday's road after our camp breakfast and a farewell to our hosts and their sheep dogs. Mercifully the road lacked the

quantity and depth of yesterday's sand and bulldust. But there were still lengthy patches to keep you focused. That was the first 45km to Tilpa. The Tilpa pub was manned by a couple of young women from Ireland on working holidays. They seemed to be the only people in town.

We had a further 130-150km to get to Wilcannia. The initial plan was to travel from Tilpa on the eastern side. That was based on internet research; but the good advice was to get the latest intelligence about roads from the Tilpa pub. That didn't quite work out.

We did learn that the continuation of the road on the western side of the river had recently been graded and so was assumed to be relatively better. As four of us were to discover, that didn't mean it was without the need to be wary of

One of us opted to cross over to the eastern side at Tilpa for the longer ride to Wilcannia, unperturbed by the local advice. As sometimes happens, it turned out that had we known what it was like, we might all have taken it. Apart from a patch of mud and the inevitable bits of bulldust (but no more than on the other side) the road provided enough decent surface to ride.

We all easily met up in the surprisingly small town centre of Wilcannia.

Wilcannia seemed a weary town exhausted by the tragedies of its history largely centred on the plight of its indigenous population. Beautiful sandstone buildings were accompanied by dilapidated shop fronts and a hotel with every window bricked up.



Our camp for the night was a few kilometres out of town on the banks of a billabong adjacent to the Darling.

WILCANNIA TO MENINDEE

We began today with a brief stop back in downtown Wilcannia, mainly to get some current road information from the Police. It provided another chance to take in some of the contrasts of this attractive but sad town.

The road option chosen on local advice, contrary to our initial intention, was the west side for the 150km ride to Menindee. For the first half of the trip the road continued the pattern of changing colours and textures, the latter often hard to pick even in the near distance. Curiously today it seemed that it was the black/grey soil that had the powdery patches – sometimes in the wheel tracks at other times all along the rims of the road. Nothing seemed consistent.

Over the first two days, as we stayed closer to the river, the terrain had been mostly flat but with a fair smattering of trees especially along the river bank. South of Wilcannia it opened into an expansive plain with few trees.

For the second half of the day the road was firmly packed and invited a lot of high gear cruising interrupted briefly by the inevitable patches with soft coating which moved the bike (and not only the bike) unexpectedly. But overall it was a good fast run.

Menindee is nestled amongst a series of interconnected lakes which as far as we could see were currently waterless. A point of personal

interest was Crick Park. The local Police Station had an information sheet about key historic events. Among the events listed was that Bill Crick was the first mailman to bring mail to Menindee from Wentworth in 1865; and that Crick Park was named after him. A nice reminder that the nostalgic objective of the trip was being met.

MENINDEE TO WENTWORTH

Although we had camped for only three nights, it seemed strange at the outset of Day 4 to realise we were packing up tents and other camping paraphernalia for the last time. We changed to the east side of the river for the ride to Pooncarie, once another port town of the Darling at about the half-way mark between Menindee and Wentworth. A fair part of the morning's ride was on a firmly packed but crusty surface. Sort of like baked mud. Probably about half was the usual mix of sand, bulldust and loose gravel.

From Pooncarie the east side road is sealed to Wentworth. Two of us took this road. Three opted to cross to the unsealed west side road for the last stage of our river run. This is a minor road but for the most part was a good ride. However, it also produced the longest and deepest sections of sand and bulldust since the first day on the river track. Having had three and a half days of practice, it was a fun and exhilarating ride. While our more accomplished member set the pace, my fellow rider and I rode confidently and consistently in conditions that had baffled us previously. The fear factor, however, was also increased.

I suspect it was more pure terror at times that contributed to our exhaustion than the effort of controlling an errant bike.

WENTWORTH

Not surprisingly we all enjoyed our celebratory dinner at our digs at the Royal Hotel in Wentworth.

Tucked away in the far south western corner of NSW, Wentworth is a town on two rivers; the confluence of the Murray and Darling rivers and the end of the Darling River Run.

It had been a great experience: enjoyable and challenging riding and convivial company.

BIKES AND TYRES

This paragraph is for the aficionados who might be interested in bikes and tyres used on the run.

Gerard rode a Kawasaki W800 with Heidenau K60 tyres

George rode a Ducati Multistrada 1200S with Michelin Pilot Road 3 tyres. Yes, pure road bike. Very brave of him and a well-executed feat.

Vin rode a Moto Guzzi Stelvio 1200NTX with Heidenau K60 tyres.

Jack rode a V-Strom 1000 with a front Metzeler Tourance and a rear Michelin Anake.

The author rode a BMW F700GS with Continental TKC70 tyres. ●

Darling (left) meets Murray. / Lift bridge, Bourke. / Approaching Louth. / Pooncarie to Wentworth / Darling at Tilpa. / Tilpa to Wilcannia.





Probably the best-known Aussie at the TT is Cam Donald. He'll be riding the factory Norton again in 2016, with Dave Johnson as his team mate.

THE ISLE OF MAN TT

FATAL ATTRACTION **WORDS** DAVE MILLIGAN **PHOTOS** ANDRE PHILLIPE DE-BRISSAC BERNARD

Not everyone who goes to the Isle of Man dies, but enough do to make survival part of the planning process. Get Routed's Dave Milligan shares his thoughts on the subject...

It doesn't look good on paper: Over 230 competitors have died racing on the Isle of Man Mountain Circuit since 1911. Victor Surridge got the ball rolling in 1911 when he comprehensively trowelled his Rudge-Whitworth. Australians haven't fared too badly but we've lost some greats: Tom Phillis in 1962 and Ken Blake in 1981. The memory of Blake's death, in particular, still moistens the eyes of older riders because he had such enormous unexplored potential.

New Zealand has fared less well with more Island deaths including Robert Holden in 1996 and, tragically, Paul (Dobbsy) Dobbs in 2010.

Statistics for deaths among visiting spectators to the Isle during TT week are harder to assemble but often outnumber racer deaths in any given year. 1993 was a watershed period with 11 visiting spectators leaving the Island in boxes when the racing was over. The Germans and the French are over-represented in the statistics because they have to remember to ride on the left-hand side of the road rather than on the side they're used to. Signs saying "Links Fahren" (keep

left) are now all over the island. They can be hard to read at 280km/h, though, and that's what plenty of the Continentals are doing when they come unstuck.

Even spectating from an embankment adjacent to the road circuit can have its hazards. A member of the Get Routed tour party was killed in 2007 when a Norfolk-based racer, Marc Ramsbotham, hit his head on a roadside post at full tilt while he was approaching the 26th milestone (Joey's). Ramsbotham died instantly but his bike continued at racing speed up an embankment, over a fence and into a group of spectators, among whom was Greg Kenzig. Greg's story has become part of the IoM folklore. He signed up for the trip against all medical advice after he'd been diagnosed with terminal cancer 6 months previous. He discovered in the interim that he would be too weak to ride his own bike but his mate offered to take him as a pillion. A visit to the IoM was a lifetime wish and he died during the last lap of the last race after a week of the kind of pleasure only the Isle of Man can provide.

PLAYING THE NUMBERS

Whilst some of that may sound discouraging, you need to keep some perspective on TT week. Visitors

swell the population by up to 50,000 and somewhere between 18,000 – 25,000 of the visitors bring their own bikes. Some of them shipped from Australia by Get Routed. Part of the IoM's appeal is the lack of speed limits on large parts of the circuit, especially over the Mountain. Racing is scheduled for every second day and, on non-racing days, visitors and locals alike explore the circuit, often with great enthusiasm. A few tips can dramatically increase your chances of enjoying the experience unscathed.

First up, ride the circuit in the same direction the racing takes place - it's ONE WAY over the Mountain part of the circuit, anyway, with cones to separate fast and slower riders. This means the fast blokes will be coming up behind you rather than approaching you head-on. Stick to the far left of the road unless you're overtaking. If you are overtaking, do it quickly, check your mirrors and do a head check before you pull out – a mad German on a Hayabusa can appear on the scene when you least expect it. Lastly, do what Joey Dunlop used to do and make your peace with the fairies at Fairy Bridge before you attack the circuit.



Alex Pickett will be riding a Kawasaki ZX-6R in Supersport for 2016. Here he is riding for the Ice Valley BMW team at the 2015 IoMTT. Highest placed Aussie of 2015 was Dave Johnson riding a BMW S 1000 RR.

LIFE-AFFIRMING

With over 100 years of bike racing history, the Isle of Man attracts strong characters both as racers and visitors. The legendary Bill Smith was interviewed in 2000 about his 80 TT races and his spectacular crash in the '83 TT.



Get Routed Isle of Man tour - how it works

Get Routed ships your bike to England and organises all the paper work, ferry crossings to and from the Isle of Man and accommodation on the Isle of Man. Afterwards, you fly home (or spend a few weeks touring the UK and Europe) and Get Routed manages your bike for its return trip.

Only 6 places are left on the 2016 trip so book soon (make that, NOW!). It's an adventure to die for...

"The gearbox locked up and I hit Balllough Bridge when I was doing 110mph. I broke just about every bone in my body: both my legs, both my arms and my back. I was a mess – seven breaks in the right leg and four in the left."

It took Bill four years to recover but he went back to racing.

"After the crash, my elbows were completely smashed up. I had to get plastic elbows and they had to lock my arms in just one position. I got them to set them in a position that I could still ride a bike rather than washing the dishes".

Amazingly, the IoM police support the race. Local Chief Inspector, Gary Roberts, accepts that the environment can be challenging but says, in the end, "You just have to admire the sheer, mad courage of them."

Three Aussies will attack the Mountain Course again this year – Cam Donald, Dave Johnson and Alex Pickett. We wish them all the best!

For information on the 2016 & 2017 Get Routed Isle of Man trips, contact Dave Milligan on 03 5625 9080 or dave@getrouted.com.au •



IT'S A MULTI, MATE!

Dainese Latemar boots

Price - \$499.95

These multi-seasonal, multi-purpose touring boots represent the absolute top in comfort and protection from the Dainese collection. Dainese Latemar Gore-Tex boots are made entirely from full grain cowhide for complete comfort while riding. The feature which makes these boots stand out is the fact that you can tuck your pants inside them thanks to the special construction of the outer water repellent layer and the internal booties in Gore-Tex which are waterproof and breathable and keep your feet permanently dry.

A water ducting and drainage system optimises thermal comfort even under very bad weather conditions thanks also to localised perforations on the inner booties and a micro-laser treatment which allows your feet to breathe. At the same time, these boots offer excellent protection thanks to reinforced insoles, protective heel stiffener and the use of highly abrasion resistant materials which allowed them to be certified as CE - Category II. See your local bike shop, or visit www.cassons.com.au.

RIDE EM, MUSTANG!

H-D Street 500 Mustang Seat

Price - From \$319

Harley's Street 500 is very popular, but making it comfy? Well, Mustang Seats



has you covered with one of three seats available. Go the Fastback, Vintage Touring, or Vintage Touring with backrest to make your Street the best on the road. This is the best return for money that you'll get.

Mustang Seats make seats in the USA for a wide range of bikes and they have a special \$50US flat rate shipping fee to Australia and New Zealand. So, what are you waiting for! Visit www.mustangseats.com to view the entire range or place an order.

LIVE LIKE A KING

Pioneer Vision swags

Price - From \$279

Want to look like you're "roughing it" yet live like a King (or Queen)! Check out the range of swags from Pioneer Vision. They're available in four sizes and made from the very best materials, and we recommend you visit their website, or



even pop into the factory to check them out in person. The factory is at Unit 34, 35-37 Jesica Road, Campbellfield, VIC 3061 and their website is www.pioneervision.com.au

EVERYDAY STYLE

Dainese Michelle Lady ladies jacket

Price - \$649.95

Dainese Michelle Lady is a motorcycle



leather jacket for women that brings Dainese style to everyday life, without forgetting safety thanks to its Pro-Shape protectors. Available in ladies sizes 40-48. See your local bike shop or visit www.cassons.com.au.

HELD ON A MINUTE!

Held Biker Fashion 2016 catalogue

Get yourself some of the best motorcycle gear on the market. Held Australia has released their 2016 catalogue



jam-packed full of goodies! Stuart uses their stuff all the time. To order a copy, jump onto this link: <http://held.de/155-1-Order-Catalog.html>

I SHALL SAY ZIS ONLY ONCE...

Oxford One Touch tankbags

Price - From \$169.95

The user friendly One-Touch lock-on system on the Oxford tankbags securely attaches the bag in place thanks to the special fuel tank ring which replaces the stock ring. The One-Touch release mechanism easily clicks off with one swipe of the thumb and re-attaches with zero fuss. Whether you're on a road trip or commuting to work, the new Oxford Tank Bags are a game-changer for motorcycle transport.

They are available in four size capacities (4L, 15L, 20L & 30L) to fit most bike makes (Suzuki, Triumph, Honda, Kawasaki & Yamaha). All bags feature waterproof zips, rip-stop nylon, while the larger bags come with carry straps supplied, backpack straps and a roll top waterproof internal bag that ensures



long. Order your copy by telephone 03 5929 5529, or online at www.touratech.com.au. Do it now!



items remain dry, regardless of the weather. A handy see-through top section on the tank bags is ideal to keep a map, or even an iPad, visible and safe from the elements when you are on the go. See your local bike shop, or visit www.ficeda.com.au.

20/20 VISION

New Touratech catalogue

It's bigger than ever, with 2020 pages packed full of products and featuring lots of new items. Touratech has released the world's largest accessory catalogue for motorcycles and riders.

It contains clothes, gadgets and custom-designed equipment and parts to suit many models that will make your wish list a mile



FOR THE ROAD WARRIOR

Sartso Jeans

Price - \$249.95

Derived from an ancient Chinese word, Sartso simply means Killer Warrior, highlighting the robust strength of all Sartso products. This can be attributed to the company producing its own denim to create unique jeans that have rider safety and style at the forefront.

The lining of the Sartso jeans range is made from 100 per cent Dupont Kevlar fibre and has been tested to uphold up

to 6.5 seconds of abrasion resistance*. To overcome the common issue of bulky, hot and irritating jeans, Sartso has created the latest range with an ultra-thin and breathable lining, keeping riders comfortable all year round.

All ladies and men's jeans have hip and knee armour pockets for added peace of mind (armour available separately).

**EN 13595-2 - the CE testing for abrasion resistance refers to the reinforced lining only, not the entire garment.*

The new Sartso range is now being distributed in Australia by Ficeda.

To find out more head to www.ficeda.com.au.

CONNECT YOURSELF

Dainese Nexus boots

Price - \$399.95

A pair of motorcycle boots should not only be comfortable, but offer the highest level of protection to keep foot, ankle and lower leg in as good a shape as possible in the event of a crash.

Dainese has you covered (literally) with the Nexus boots. They offer the highest levels of safety, with comfort and classy

Your BMW motorcycle is a superb machine and keeping it performing at its peak takes a team of service professionals ... a team like the guys at BM Motorcycles.

We provide the highest standard of service and repair, plus access to the largest range of spare parts and accessories in Victoria.

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looks at the same time. Available in sizes 41-47, see your local bike shop or www.cassons.com.au.

ORIGINALS

Draggin Selvedge

Price - \$399

If you are looking for a quality pair of denim jeans that you can break in naturally then you have to look at Draggin Selvedge.

We all know the iconic image of Marlon Brando from the famous movie "The Wild One"...well, the jeans worn in that image is what you get when you wear Selvedge.



Before the 1950s, denim was made on a shuttle loom. This shuttle loom produces a tightly woven heavy fabric with the edges on these strips of fabric. The finish is a tightly woven band running down each side. This is known as the Selvedge edge. It prevents any fraying but it also makes them look cool when you fold the cuff of your jeans. Available in sizes 30-44, see your local bike shop or jump onto www.dragginjeans.net to grab a pair.

FREE!

Delkevic Exhausts

Delkevic Exhausts are offering free



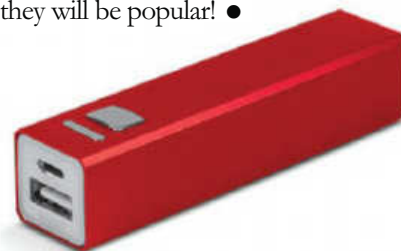
postage on all exhausts for those living in Qld, NSW and the ACT. Delkevic has over 3000 exhausts for modern and classic bikes and everything in between. They also sell replacement

radiators. Contact Joe on 07 5543 5949 or visit www.delkevic.com.au.

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Unique Character 9/10
Value 170



RATED 3 OUT OF 5 HELMETS

Railway Hotel Ravenswood

Barton St Ravenswood Qld
T: 07 47702144

Rated 3 Helmets
Unique Character 7/10
Value: 210

Potemkin's pubs

I collect buildings which are constructed with at least one corner at less than 90 degrees.

Shot from a very specific angle they create an impression of being façades, a certain two dimensionality resembling those in the old Wild West movies.

These buildings are rare and it's even rarer to find more than one in a city, let alone a smaller town.

Amazingly both of Ravenswood's pubs are like this. The shot on this double page spread is straight out of the camera, no manipulation, no tricks, no photoshopping. Head there and like so many things, if you look, you'll see.

GHOSTLY CHARM

WORDS/PHOTOS COLIN WHELAN

So anyway, I headed north out of Belyando and starting looking for a camp. Eventually I spotted a caravan

beside a dam a few hundred metres off to the side.

Bruce came out to greet me with the advice this was a private station, he was just a caretaker ("Makin' sure the bastards don't steal the irrigation

pumps!") and I wouldn't be able to stay. I asked if I could try to convince him otherwise and he said to give it a shot.

I convinced him and he told me to make myself at home but that I'd have to put up with his gennie going for a



coupla hours from 7.30pm.

“Eileen and I’ve been married for 56 years,” he explains. “Every single evening I take her to the movies. Out here we just sit back in the van and watch one on DVD and we need the gennie to run the extra power.”

How bloody beautiful! I give ‘em a 100 metres space, and throw up the tent beside the dam.

I end up staying 2 days with this ex-shearer and his wife, shooting the breeze during the day and shooting the stars at night. Over a brew on my departure day, we (once again) get onto pubs.

I tell him about Oscar Wilde’s quote, “I prefer women with a past. They’re so damn amusing...” and how I’ve changed it to, ‘I prefer pubs with a past, they’re so damn interesting...’ Bruce knows a couple “just up the road” that fit the bill.

(For me Wilde’s quote is inseparable from Mae West’s “I like men with pasts but prefer them with presents.”

But I digress!)

The pubs Bruce’s got in mind are at Ravenswood, south from Charters Towers on the Burdekin Falls Dam Rd.

Oh, and while I’m there could I take a message to Woodie who runs the council camp ground? And don’t get into a shout with him. “Every time I’ve been on the drink with him, he’s left me completely legless,” warns Bruce with a grin and a glint and I think I get the picture.

So the next afternoon I’m cruising south past the top servo then left into Ravenswood’s main drag to be welcomed by the drop dead gorgeous Railway Hotel on the right.

The first train arrived in Ravenswood in 1884 and the Railway pub joined in 18 years later. The trains quit coming in 1930 but the pub’s stuck around.

It’s now owned by Robbie who got it dirt cheap from a debt chasing bank which’d repossessed it after the previous owners, the Odins OMG went bust.

A back buggered from 17 years working in the mines has stopped Robbie’s dad, Charlie, from riding his HD so now he pretty much runs the place and he pulls me a cold one from fresh new taps.

It’s quiet so Charlie has time to jaw and I settle down and we go through the

usual deets of facilities and history and gossip and other rubbish.

The Railway has 22 rooms all up, nine singles, ten queens and three family rooms. There's no twin rooms but turn up here on your own and a room'll set you back just 40 bucks with a basic brekky thrown in. All rooms have air con and a fan but it's never cold enough out here for heating. They're all basic but clean and comfortable, the showers have plenty of pressure and heat.

There's no undercover parking but if you want your bike off the street there's plenty of room around the back.

The restaurant is open for lunch and dinner seven days serving standard pub grub.

And then we get onto the pub's longest term resident:

When Charlie and Robbie first bought the place, like so many country pubs, there were no locks on any of the room doors or on downstairs access and their sleep was regularly interrupted by footsteps up and down the bloody creaking stairs. So they put locks on the rooms and padlocks downstairs.

In the mornings, even after nights when they had no guests, the padlocks would be open, the locked doors swinging. It got way too scary for Charlie's daughter and she hit the toe back to Charters.

Pretty soon the young woman made herself known. She'd brush by them as they sat on the bar stools, she'd perch on a seat, visible to just one of them and smile. She'd move things around on the bar when no-one was watching.

Last year a group of tourists booked out the pub. Around midnight Charlie heard voices and banging and the bloke in room 12 is packing his stuff and getting the hell outa there because Ghost Lady told him to leave. He spent the night sleeping in his car out front.

Another time Charlie's, alone in the pub, mopping the floor and he feels a breeze and turns to see small footprints across the work he's just done.

Ghosts aside, the Railway's a damn good haunt. (sorry, couldn't resist). I finish my \$5 schooner and head down to check out the Imperial on the eastern edge of the, er, CBD.





I park the bike beside the pub, pat the Husky resting in the shade and head in through the side door. Suddenly I'm in the most magnificent billiards room I've ever seen in any pub anywhere.

Gracing the middle of the polished wood floor is a Herron and Smith 12 x 6. Slide your hands over the surface and feel the rub of the green then take in the historic photos around the walls.

I head through a doorway, passing the amazing mahogany wood staircase and then I'm into the bar with its beautiful cedar and pressed-iron counter imported from England, while the centre piece is Australian cedar. It's all breathtakingly beautiful.

The husky's owner is the only other bloke drinking so I pull up a pew and find out that like the barman, his name's John, who tells me the dog's 'Bosun' and "he's me ride home."

A schooie's just five bucks here too ('cheaper than Townsville') so I hoe into one and begin cross-examining owner John. He's a retired applied mathematics teacher and he and wife, Di came here 16 years back to visit their daughter who was married to a bloke working in the mine. They fell in love with the place and made 'the best decision of our lives' and bought the pub.

The Impy's a bit smaller and more expensive than the Railway, but it does have 5 twin rooms each with 2 single beds so if you're riding with a mate or a group it's better value at \$75 for you both. There's also three single rooms (\$55 ea), and eight doubles. (also \$75). The beds are all old brass beauties, in keeping with Di's claim that the pub is 95% original.

Every room has air-con but again no heating. There's a lock up bike shed out back and you can throw a swag next to it for nix so long as you drink at the bar and grab a feed from the restaurant which has lunch and dinner seven days, Thursday being pizza and Friday fish 'n' chips.

All the fittings, the bathrooms and the common areas are well maintained and the showers are good and hot with full pressure. The enthusiasm and love of the owners is tangible at every turn.

The Impy's got an official ghost living in room 12A and John and Di are very happy to tell you all about her. But it's the ghosts in the billiard room who interest me more. Eddie Charlton played on that table in 2002 and Walter Lindrum apparently racked up 50 years earlier.

I go back out and suck it all in.

As the arvo wears on a bloke slides into the bar in a motorised wheelchair.

Got a face like an old brown paper bag and both his legs've been amputated above the knee. You know he's hasn't learnt about life from books.

Turns out he's Woodie from the camping ground so I give him the message.

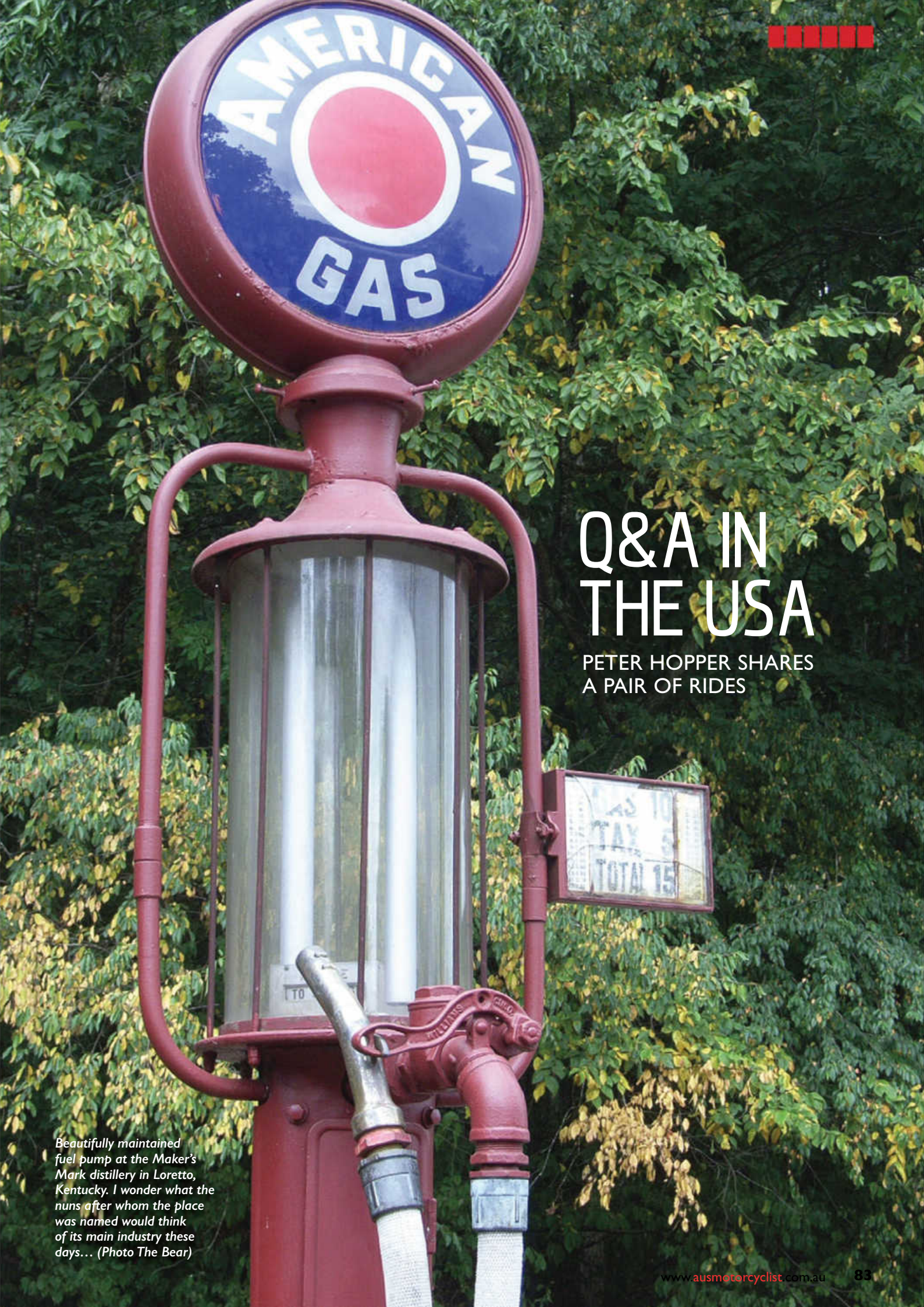
"Shearer Bruce told me to tell you you're a grumpy old prick." The paper bag creases some more and he asks if I'd also been warned about drinking with him.

We share a chuckle and I understand the glint in Bruce's eye and the truth in the comment that Woodie would leave me legless.

I leave the Johns and Woodie and a pile of miners who've arrived and head out to scout for places to shoot the stars once the sky turns black. I find some old mining diggings and a church, and as I head back I look up. Drinker John is on his bike. True to his word, too pissed to pedal, he's being towed home by Bosun!

I head back into to this old mining town knowing there's not a ghost of chance of me leaving next morning.

Full disclosure: Contrary to usual industry practice, I was not offered nor did I seek any discount or special deal whilst visiting any establishment mentioned in this review. My usual thanks to my HR dept. ●



Q&A IN THE USA

PETER HOPPER SHARES
A PAIR OF RIDES

Beautifully maintained fuel pump at the Maker's Mark distillery in Loretto, Kentucky. I wonder what the nuns after whom the place was named would think of its main industry these days... (Photo The Bear)

The Special Feature in this issue is Organised Tours. We thought we'd better show you the other way of travel, as well!

When traveling oversea to ride a motorcycle, there are inevitably lots of questions. You need some answers before you go very far with your planning.

Where will I go? Can I afford it? Will I be safe? Where will I stay? And so on and so on.

If it all gets too much, book a tour with one of the many reputable tour organisers advertising elsewhere in these pages. But if you don't mind living on the edge, and you want to make it happen yourself, I hope this will help.

The first question I want to address is, "How much will it cost?"

The answer is as varied as the people in the world and the places they want to visit, of course. In some ways it can be better to set a budget and then find a trip that you can do for that price. But here is my experience, comparing 26,000km of motorcycling touring in the US with the same distance in Australia.

In the US, we travelled two up, touching 46 states in 73 days on a Kawasaki 1400 Concours. In Australia, we more or less did a lap of the continent in an anti-clockwise direction from Mackay, Queensland, taking in the Moto GP and the Barry Sheene ride as our anchor points. If you would like more detail about either trip, feel free to email me (peter@hop-home.com) and I will be happy to talk about it for as long as you want. We did this in 2014, so that is how old the information is.

Okay, the focus here is money. When motorcycling, I spend money on three main things: fuel, food, and accommodation. There is also doing and buying stuff, like tours and souvenirs, but that part you can work out for yourself.

Before I get into the detail, here is the overview. In Australia, we travelled for 70 days, we did not do any of city tours, and we spent 24 nights staying with family and friends. In the US, we travelled for 73 days, and we stayed with others 10 nights and did five city tours. On both trips we had the bike serviced

once, and replaced the tyres. I did an extra rear tyre in the US, which is a statement about both the great quality of the roads and the pace you can ride at. It just demands that you wear out rear tyres...

Not included in these numbers are the capital cost of buying a bike, or the flights. Just the riding. My daily cost in Australia was \$202. In the US it was US\$186. When we went, the Aussie dollar would buy 89 cents US, so for us, our US trip cost \$206 a day Australian. Exchange rate really is a big deal. At the moment, with our dollar buying 68 cents US, the cost would be greater.

Take those facts for what they're worth. The reality is that you are not really comparing apples with apples.

FUEL

I struggled with comparing fuel, given it is sold in US gallons over there. By my calculations, the cost is about two thirds the Australian price. The GTR seldom cost more than \$20 to fill in the US, and in Australia it is about \$30. The price of fuel did not vary much in the US. The only time we paid Australian-type prices was in the middle of the Big Sur, on the Californian coast. You can work your stops so that you don't have to buy fuel here, but we didn't.

When buying fuel in the US, you have to pay first. We mostly used the Travelex Visa Debit card we had set up before we left. Servos over there have a system where you swipe at the pump before you start and it bills you the amount to your card when you hang up the nozzle. Sometimes it prints the receipt at the pump and sometimes you have to collect it inside.

But there is a variation which includes an added security check, where the pump will ask for your zip code before it will start. When this happens, as an OS tourist, you have to go in and give them the card or pay in cash. The pump wants a five digit code. Traveling two up, we always took the cash option. Robyn would go in and give them \$20, they would turn the pump on, I would fill the bike and she would collect the change. This plan worked well.

Except one time in Kentucky. She went in and the pump started but

she failed to return. I had to go after her, where I found she had become a celebrity. The cashier had announced to the whole store that this lady was from Australia and she was traveling on a motorcycle. Here she was surrounded by a bunch of Korean War Vets sharing stories about Australians they had met. Eventually, after a truly warm welcome for us to Kentucky, we were able to return to the bike and continue with our ride.

Before I finish with this section, there are two more things about fuel. Firstly, most pumps have a lever to start them. They don't usually start when you lift the nozzle like they do here. The other thing is, New Jersey and Oregon have Gas Pump Attendants. They will let you fill your own bike but they must start the pump and hand you the nozzle and you hand it back when you're done. It seems to have something to do with safety, which is quite unusual in the US. Regardless, it creates employment.

FOOD

Before we set out, we were told that food in the US is cheap and that it is terrible. We found neither of these things to be completely true. It can be both, but this is true of Australia too. In fact it is more likely to be expensive and terrible in Australia than in the US. The thing that is mostly true across the US is that meals are large. We often shared one meal. When we said we intend to share, it was no problem and service staff would provide us with an empty plate.

There are some challenges to overcome when eating out in the US. In most cases, well, in all cases except the fast food chains like Maccas and Burger King, food comes with table service. Well, it is not really included; you pay for it on top by tipping. Nothing is as it appears in the food world. Tax is added to the advertised price and tax amount varies from State to State. Then you should also tip about 15 per cent. It may also be that you need to pay for all the components. For example, if you want to have roast beef and veggies, you order roast beef and that will give you roast beef and probably chips. Then you order each type of veggies you

want individually, and you are charged for each one. So, for my part, I don't reckon food is much cheaper. Sharing is what makes it cheaper.

Eating when touring can be a challenge too. It appears that Americans love to eat in their cars. There are relatively few roadhouses like the ones we enjoy in Australia, with tables to sit at while you take a break. We did not give up and the highlight of our trip was on a cold wet day at a service station in Alabama.

We fuelled up and found they had a few tables inside. We ordered hot chocolates and were invited to sit at the tables with the locals who then entertained us with a discussion about obesity in their broad southern accents.

The Australian Motorcyclist affinity for coffee and bakeries has to be set aside in the US. They just don't have bakeries - you know the ones that sell custard tarts and cream apple turnovers. (I will not speak of coffee). In 16,000 miles, we found two - one in Lake Placid, The Bluesberry Bakery run by a German bloke, and the other the Country Cupboard Bakery and Delicatessen in Dayton, in the east of Washington State. Both were very good. Denny's and IHop are safe chains, and we had a lot of fun eating at the local food places too. The clue is the same as Australia - don't eat where there are no cars in the car park. A mistake we made a couple of times.

ACCOMMODATION

This is where it really gets cheap compared with Australia. We stayed in hotel accommodation. This is a great contrast to anything we have in Australia and where you really see the impact of population. Most of the places we choose were between 2 and 6 stories with a 24 hr reception. The rooms were large with a queen or king bed and ensuite. Most had shared laundries and some even had heated pools and gyms and nearly all included breakfast. The quality of the breakfast varied a bit, but when it all comes for around US\$100 a night, it is great value and there is lots of it. With the exception of the Grand Canyon, Yellowstone National Park and

Washington DC (where we stayed in walking distance of the White House), where prices were more like Australian charges, we would on the day, work out how far we were going and at lunch (generally in a Maccas - hate the food, love the wifi - and unlike Australia, it works) book ahead for that night. Accommodation was Robyn's job, and she became an expert at reading Trip Advisor reviews. Worked a treat.

OTHER THINGS

Buying tyres in the US was interesting. I brought my first ever set of Michelin Road Pilot 4 GTs in Fort Worth. They were \$350 for the pair. Sounds cheap, and it is but they charged full workshop rates to fit them (\$150 later), so it was much the same as Australia. The other trap is that lots of bike shops trade Sunday and have Monday off and, of course, that would be the day I wanted to buy tyres.

Other things we found different were the roads. Roads in the US are brilliant. We met a motorcyclist at Big Bend. "I had a buddy that went to Australia he said you got no roads?" he said. How do you answer that? Yes, he is right as, compared to the US, Australia has nothing. In fact, the road for Sydney to Brisbane is simply embarrassing. The only thing you need to watch on the secondary roads is, while having a great surface, they have no shoulders and few guard rails. If you run wide, you are over the edge.

The speed limit in the US seems to be just guidelines. On our first interstate experience, the Interstate 5, we were riding at our 2 or 3mph over the 65mph limit, when we were overtaken by a semis doing 90. We moved up to flow with the traffic. On interstates, there is no oncoming traffic and, in most places, three lanes each direction.

Mobile phone use in cars is a pandemic. We estimated 1 in 3 drivers were using mobile phones for hand held calls, texting or Facebooking. In Connecticut, they had roadside Text stops to deal with the problem, meanwhile in Arizona they were debating if it should be illegal for learner driver to text. The "for" argument runs along the lines "if they

don't practice while they are learning, how will they do it when they are licensed?"

The landscape is diverse, from snow to desert in a day. You'll be at 12,000 feet in the Rockies and three days later you can be at minus 282 feet in Death Valley.

To sum up, when we went an Australian dollar bought about 89 US cents. Given that we bought a bike for about US\$14,000 and sold it for US\$8,000, I reckon that our trip cost the same as traveling in Australia, plus air fares. With the dollar now at less than 70 cents, it may cost a little more, but seriously, the amazing landscape and delightful roads and the quality people make it well worthwhile.

Remember when you are planning a trip: it costs money to live even if you sit home and watch TV. The truth is, in our case, we did not spend all the money we had saved for the trip. So now we are planning another one.

My advice is, don't talk about it just go. Oh, make sure you have travel insurance. We used TID, but we didn't need use it.

BEAR "FACTS"

The Hoppers obviously had a wonderful time, and at a reasonable cost. The words of wisdom above are worth heeding. But there are some minor points where I would like to add to Peter's advice.

The equivalent of our roadhouses, in the US, are usually diners. The reason they're not so obvious is that they are not necessarily by the main road. You may have to leave that to find them. They serve excellent food, in my opinion, and prices are reasonable.

Motels in the US are generally considerably cheaper than in Australia, especially the small "Mom and Pop" family owned places. Don't expect much from the breakfast, though.

Yes, American main roads are good, and that suits American motorcyclists because many of them like to stay on the superslab. Back roads, usually called "county roads", are however quite often gravel. Well maintained, but still gravel.

And Korean War vets, Peter? Are you sure? You must have been near an Old Timer's Home... PT ●



UNDERSTANDING GRIP

THERE'S MORE TO IT THAN YOU MIGHT THINK **WORDS/PHOTOS MARK MCVEIGH - MOTODNA**

PRESENTED BY PIRELLI TYRES

A motorcycle tyre is an extraordinary piece of engineering. Those black round sticky things are able to keep our motorcycles in control at extreme speed and lean angles, relying on only two small patches of rubber in contact with the asphalt.

However, most riders underestimate the level of grip available from their tyres. This misconception of available grip can be a real negative for the rider

resulting in reduced riding pleasure; but there is also a darker side.

THE DARK SIDE

A big contributor to rider trauma on the road is the survival reaction.

Survival reactions are primarily caused by the riders' lack of understanding of their limit and the limit of their machines. More precisely, the riders don't sufficiently understand the grip that is available from their tyres.

The survival reaction will often cause the rider to overreact and panic in response to a small problem, such as mid-corner gravel or an oncoming car cutting the corner, resulting in a bigger problem that could have been avoided if the rider had understood the available grip.

For example, a corner tightens unexpectedly. The rider panics and grabs the front brake, overloading the front tyre, and slides across the road. A more experienced rider might have



rolled off the throttle, trail braked or simply leant the bike over more.

Some may say prevention is better than cure and the rider should have approached the corner more slowly, but we are just looking at the reality of what's happening on our roads. We will save the roadcraft lesson for another day.

Understanding the overall grip that your tyres can supply at a given time means you can ride that much closer to the limit on the track, or with a greater safety margin on the road.

GET A GRIP

Assuming the road surface is free from debris, the main contributor to grip is the weight or load on each tyre.

Try sliding an eraser across your kitchen table. Now try the same thing pushing down hard on the eraser. You

will notice the difference in grip with more vertical load.

To apply this understanding to your bike, we can use the dollar analogy.

Imagine your front tyre has a dollar's worth of grip. You could spend 60 cents on braking which leaves 40 cents for cornering or 10 cents on braking and 90 cents on cornering.

The more you spend on one, the less you have to spend on the other, and there's a big penalty for overspending!

Awareness of bike balance is also an important factor. Weight distribution between front and rear tyres is constantly changing as you corner, accelerate and brake.

THE PITCH

Obviously when you brake, the bike pitches forward applying load to the front tyre. When you release the

brakes, weight comes off the front tyre and starts transferring to the rear.

The key is to load the tyre progressively to build pressure on the contact patch. This applies to braking, acceleration and cornering.

Your tyre contact patches may be small but the level of pressure at that point is high when the vertical load is high.

Problems arise when a rider overloads the tyre by grabbing the throttle or brake, rather than applying the input smoothly and gradually.

Check out the video reel to hear motoDNA coach, Mark McVeigh explain how important advanced rider training is for road riders.
www.motodna.net ●



WHAT A FIND!

FORGET THE NAME,
LOOK AT THE PRODUCT.

RJAYS LIGHTENS UP

Rjays CFK-1 Carbon 'Graphics' helmet
Price - \$359.95

Dark tint visor - \$34.95

In the past, Rjays might not have been the first brand to come to mind when you thought about top quality. The brand has been a good, midrange option for motorcycle gear for years. Always good value, but not outstanding. Then, however, just as Rjays' main rival, Dririder did a couple of years ago, Rjays really picked up its game. The brand began to appear on top class items, but still with a relatively low price tag. It's a win-win for us motorcyclists. Take a look at the Rjays CFK-1 carbon 'Graphics' helmet for instance. I want

you to forget the name on the side of the helmet, pick it up – it's damn light; look at the shell – it's full carbon fibre and looks a million dollars; put it on – boy that's a comfy helmet;

now go riding with it – gee, it's actually really quiet, there's no buffeting and the airflow around the face (with the visor down) is just right. Now think about the price tag. Where else will you get a full carbon fibre helmet for so little money? Only at Rjays, that's where. We'd already had some positive comments from some of you about Rjays Carbotech flip front helmet and decided to give the CFK-1 a whirl for those not wanting a flip front. Apart from the full carbon fibre shell, the CFK-1 comes with a 5 point multi-positional ratchet visor system (with tool-less visor removal); aerodynamic shape and Aerotech technology, which



reduces noise and turbulence; 3 (forward facing) air vents and 2 rear air exhaust vents; a removable and washable interior lining; and an anti-scratch clear visor with optional dark tint, light tint and coated silver visors. I opted for the dark tint which is great in most lighting conditions, but a touch smoky in direct sunlight. In fact, this is all I can find that isn't up to par with a helmet priced at well over \$500!

I purposely delayed the review of the CFK-1 so I could wear it for much longer and give it that day-to-day bashing that helmets seem to get from high usage. I did this just to see if there were any flaws, but none have become

apparent. The CFK-1 has become even more comfy and I love how quiet it is, no matter the bike I'm riding. So that means that the aerodynamics work well with or without a "screened" motorcycle.

The removable liner is extremely effective to wick away sweat and testing this helmet in some of the heat we've had, I know it works!

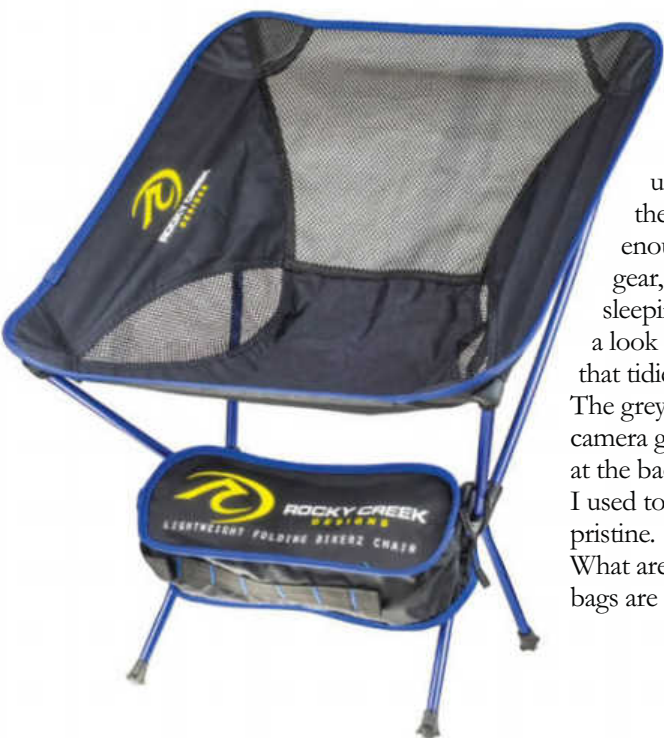
The Rjays CFK-1 carbon is my new everyday helmet. If you see me riding on the street, I'll be wearing it. It handles the day-to-day knock around, it's quiet and looks like a thousand dollar helmet. What more could you ask for! It comes with a big thumbs up from me. If you don't like the "Graphics" version, you can also get a plain "Carbon" version, which is \$20 cheaper. Sizes range from XS-2XL. See your local bike shop or visit www.cassons.com.au SW

SIT DOWN, RELAX!

Rocky Creek Designs Bikerz Chair
Price - \$87.95 + postage

How many times have you gone away for the weekend on your bike and thought "gee it would be great if I had a chair to sit on, instead of sitting on the ground, or on a rock which is giving me a sore bum" when you're having a break from a long day's riding?

The answer is simple, the Rocky Creek Designs Bikerz Chair is small enough to take with you on any ride! It folds into a bag (shown attached to the legs in the pic) measuring 38 x 10 x 12cm and will



fit in your pannier, your bag or backpack, your roll etc.

Lightweight but strong, the chair size is 52 x 50 x 65cm when opened and will hold up to 120 kg and yes, I've tested it with me sitting on it and my ten year old daughter jumping on me! The chair in the bag weighs 940g! (that's less than a litre of water) and the chair almost assembles itself with self-locating shock cord technology. Be the envy of your mates at the next Rally or getaway. They'll all want to buy one as well. Available from www.rockycreekdesigns.com.au SW

CARRY THAT WEIGHT

Rjays Touring Saddlebags
Price - \$79.95

At first I thought: why would I ever need something as large as these bags? I have trouble filling a pair of standard-size panniers on most bikes except on a Laverda (in-joke for Lav owners). But then it occurred to me that I could actually pack away all the stuff I usually sling all over the bike. Yes, the Touring Saddlebags are large enough to take not only my camping gear, toolkit and so on but even my sleeping bag and one-man tent. Take a look at the photo to see how much that tidies up the look!

The grey box on the back of the bike is camera gear, by the way. The red material at the back of the panniers is a t-shirt I used to keep the bike's paintwork pristine.

What are we looking at here, then? The bags are rectangular, which makes them



really easy to pack and unpack. No extra compartments inside or out; what you see is what you get. To be honest, I often have trouble finding ways of using extra compartments.

The bags are made of heavy duty ballistic nylon and have adjustable, equally heavy duty Velcro straps which can run under or over the bike's seat. The tops roll closed and fasten with two retaining clips each to keep luggage dry. Dual buckles on each bag make sure that the roll top doesn't become undone. The backs of the bags have two loops each which can be fastened to something on the bike frame to stop the bags from flapping. If you used some kind of pannier frame these loops would fasten to that.

Two words of caution: use some kind of protection for the paint on which the bags rest, and make sure you tie them down if you put the straps over the seat – unless, like me, you just sit on the straps. Simple, strong and practical and

considering their size not at all bad looking. It's difficult to imagine how these bags could be better – especially at the price. See your local bike shop or visit www.cassons.com.au. PT

JUST BLOW IN THE TUBE

Rocky Creek Designs Tubeless Tyre Repair Kit Price - \$69.95

Let's get rid of the boring bit right at the beginning. I don't need to tell you why you should carry a tyre repair kit both for yourself and fellow riders. So why am I telling you about Rocky Creek's kit? Because it's so useful. We have used and written about the core of this kit, the Dynaplug Ultralite Puncture Repair System, before. It is simply a small container which holds an insertion tool and some plugs, and acts as a handle. Could not be easier to use, and if the hole is large you can put in multiple plugs.

The entire kit, which fits into a small neoprene bag, also includes a strong multi-tool to remove the cause of the puncture and to trim the ends of the plugs (as well as all the other multi-tool things); three CO2 cartridges, an inflation tool and a short connecting hose. Rocky Creek tells us that "A Dynaplug repair will typically last the life of your tyre", although we'd be careful of that.

I need hardly point out that the multi-tool is useful for other things, but that is how we used it in this case – we removed some fencing wire that had become entangled in a mate's front wheel. Don't



run over fencing wire, Dave! We had used the tyre repair function before, so we're happy to recommend that as well. The kit seems really good value to us. Available from www.rockycreekdesigns.com.au. PT

ON YOUR BACK

Kuryakyn Daily Tour Bag Price - \$172

Every now and then, I hear someone talking about the way this century is going to be China's. I suspect that these are the same people who reckoned that the latter half of the last century would be Japan's. We all know how that worked out; Japanese people get zero interest on their investments and Nissan is now largely owned by Renault. That's a French company in case you don't care, which of course I don't either. But I wonder if China's apparent success might not work out much the same way. While these vastly successful countries come and go, two others just go on doing what they do and, despite faltering occasionally, remain genuine commercial world powers. I mean, of course, Germany (of which more another time) and the United States of America. Do the Chinese make the consumer goods for the entire world? Well, the Americans usually designed them – and the Germans supplied the tools. Which might seem like an odd way of starting a review of some motorcycle luggage, but there you go. If you think it's irrelevant, why not buy some Chinese shares and watch their dance. What set me off was the arrival of a piece of luggage I ordered for our H-D



Sportster. It is a Kuryakyn Daily Tour Bag, and while I intended it for the Sportster, it has since proven to have a lot of other uses. You can see in the photos that it works well on a Vespa. The bag is semi-rigid, equipped with waterproof zippers and a rain cover and is made of tough 1200 denier nylon. It has more pockets than I've had visits to emergency departments, and the chrome on the various metal clips would make Harley-Davidson proud. Lots of these clips on lots of straps are supplied with the bag, along with an apparently redundant rain cover.

Why am I praising this bag when I made a point above of my preference for luggage with few extra compartments? For the same reason that blokes (and yes, it is usually blokes) go nuts in hardware shops. The possibilities! I know I'll never use all of those compartments, just as I know I'll never use that lawn aerator... but I could!

All right, common sense time. The bag holds just over 23 litres and will easily see you through not only a day, as per the name, but a weekend. That means that you don't need to worry about carrying any other luggage and cluttering up the lines of your bike, or risking scratching the paint. And all of those straps mean that you should be able to fit it to just about anything. Keeping in mind the relative value of the greenback and the aussie, the price is pretty damn good as well. Oh, and while it was made in China, it was designed in the USA... Kuryakyn's Australian distributor is Rolli's Speed Shop, www.rolliesspeedshop.com. PT ●





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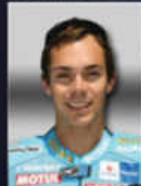
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BUY THE FOX

AND: THE ELVES HAVE BEEN BUSY SINCE CHRISTMAS

A part from the announcement that our outfit can be yours, we have a lot of stuff to cover this month – in fact, we have so much to cover that we’ve left some of it for next month. Here’s what we had room for.

FOR SALE YAMAHA BOLT WITH SIDECAR

Bye, bye baby
Price - \$16,000

All good things etc etc... Our no-expenses-spared Yamaha Yard Built Competition-winning Bolt has come to the point where we can't really add much more. It has an Indian-sourced sidecar

with a frame especially made by sidecar guru Phil Duffy, which includes an Ikon shock on the sidecar and a Ural steering damper.

Let me just go through the other features of the outfit. Paint is by 2 Sus Custom Resprays and is 18 coats deep; that's just counting the colour, not the clear. It is a beautiful, rich red which looks bottomless in the sun. Accents are gold paint. The bike's seat is a Mustang touring seat with back rest (wonderful invention) and the sidecar seat is original, but has been re-covered in a better material and with a different, more stylish shape. Wherever possible we have stuck to Yamaha parts, so that the blinkers, taillight and sidecar wheel are all original Yamaha Bolt parts. Bike suspension has been upgraded to the shocks from the Bolt R. There are numerous Yamaha accessories on the bike.



The outfit is called "Fox" and has the name on the tank and the sidecar flank (in Japanese). It is also registered as "Fox 58", the number being the cubic inch capacity of the proven vee twin engine.

Tyres are near-new and braided brake lines mean that the single disc on the front is quite enough to stop the



whole shebang. In fact, the whole assembly is remarkably light. This means you can tune it to your personal preference with varying weight (or none) in the sidcar boot.

Drop us a line to info@ausmotorcyclist.com.au or call me on 0418 421 322 if you're interested in becoming the next guardian of the Fox. PT

YAMAHA MT-07

Shown the love

Yep, even your motorcycle deserves a Christmas present and our MT-07 got just that. With just over six and

a half thousand on the clock and just under twelve months since its initial 1000km service, I fed the beast some new oil courtesy of Yamalube, freed up through the airbox (which required half of the bike to be pulled apart!), and gave it a through checking over and clean.



I also fitted the genuine accessory rear seat cowl. Seeing as I had already removed the pillion pegs, there was no need to have a seat there and the accessory seat cowl gives the MT-07 a very clean rear end (no pun intended) and was a simple five second job to fit. Remove the seat and clip the cowl in. Priced at \$317.85, it's not cheap, but boy does it look the goods! It comes available in matt black, or gloss grey (the one we have), depending on the colour of your bike. See your local Yamaha dealer or visit <https://yshop.yamaha-motor.com.au>

The oil we used was Yamaha's own Yamalube range, being the 4-S 10-40W Semi-Synthetic, which makes the engine run very smooth and quietly. Four litres retails for only



\$59.95 and can be used in just about any bike. See your local Yamaha dealer to purchase. SW

HARLEY-DAVIDSON XL1200V '72'

Suck it up, princess!

Price - \$262

The Kuryakyn Velociraptor Air Cleaner is yet another accessory from this high-quality American brand that's found its way onto the Sporty. Replacing the rather bulky and somewhat restrictive standard H-D unit, it offers a simple, tight appearance and a K&N washable filter. With its Super Ring insert, which covers the mounting bolts, the Velociraptor



supplies smooth airflow to the motor and a lot more leg room on the right-hand side of the engine. Ironheads Custom Motorcycles in Hoppers Crossing, Victoria took care of the fitting for us.

We are sticking with Kuryakyn for our upgrades at the moment. There are a couple of reasons for that. You'll understand one of them if you've ever seen a Kuryakyn catalogue (www.kuryakyn.com or www.rolliesspeedshop.com) with its multitude of sparkly goodies. Shiny! The other reason is that the company is taking an interest in our build, and helping out with suggestions. The idea of fitting the Velociraptor came from them, and we are very happy we went along with it.

You may have noticed that we are gradually transforming the 72, increasing the chrome and adding a few bits and pieces to make the bike both practical and even more attractive. Stay tuned for the next episode, when we bolt on yet more accessories – and remove some as well! Kuryakyn's Australian distributor is Rolliess Speed Shop, www.rolliesspeedshop.com. PT

DUCATI SCRAMBLER

Only the best for a Bear derriere

Price - US\$329

The standard seat on the Ducati Scrambler, like most OEM bike seats,

is not a long distance proposition if you want to retain the ability to walk. It's fine around town, but your bottom will not thank you for a full day's ride. Fitting Mustang Seats' latest and greatest, designed especially for the Scrambler, seemed the obvious solution.

It was the right one, too; the seat of course fitted straight on. I have now done a couple of decent runs of 400km or so on the bike and the Mustang seat transforms the whole experience. As the company says, you get to keep the retro look – in fact you add to it with the generous padding – but advance to 21st century riding comfort. The general style, classic tuck-and-roll stitching and detailed seam lines accentuate the classic 1970s look and manage to add to the comfort level. But it's not only the padding. The shape of the seat keeps me back from the tank and, once again as Mustang claims, seated firmly “into” the motorcycle. My posture improved as soon as I sat down.

Mustang's proprietary foam layers, carefully arranged, provide the most remarkable level of comfort. Seat material is soft and suede-like and does not have any of the “plastic” feel you sometimes get with cheap seats. The baseplate and the way the seat material is attached to it, meanwhile, match the high quality of the seat materials. While the seat does look different from the original, it does not

spoil the lines of the bike – always a major consideration.

One caveat about the seat material: because it has that matt finish, it does stay wet for a while after rainfall. Try to park it under cover if you're expecting a cloudburst – or just sweep

it dry with the edge of your hand.

I'm happy to recommend the Mustang Scrambler seat highly for comfort and value for money. And keep in mind that Mustang now has guaranteed



maximum postage of US\$50 to anywhere in Australia or New Zealand. That's good value, just like the seat. PT ●



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OLD BOOTS

AN INSIGHT INTO BEAR WEAR

“I say, I say, I say, do you like Kipling?”
 “I don’t know, I’ve never kiplped.”
 That pathetic Dad joke may well be the most interesting thing about this

story, unless you’re interested in old boots. Kipling, you may recall, wrote a strange little poem called *Boots*, which is why I’ve dredged up the joke.

But seriously, boots are interesting if only because they are one (or perhaps I should say two) of the most vital pieces of motorcycle wear. I have dumped a bike while wearing sandshoes, and let me tell you, my ankle still reminds me of that at times. With pain. So let’s take a look at the boots I wasn’t wearing at the time, but always wear now. And let’s face it, what other motorcycle magazine would have

the nerve to devote an entire story to one of its staffers’ boots?

Please note that I have not included prices or even the names of the boots. Some of them are quite old and possibly now longer available (though the brand will usually still be offering something similar for you to find on the web) and prices will definitely have changed. This is not a buyers’ guide, but a way of stimulating you to consider what you might use to encase your own pins. And don’t worry, unlike Stuart I do not have any white boots...



LONG TIME GONE

For long trips I have the best touring boots I have ever worn, or even seen. They are from American mail-order supplier Aerostich, although they’re made in Italy, and they are wonderful. A combination of laces and hook-and-loop panels fits them snugly to my feet, and a clip like that on a dirt bike boot secures them even more thoroughly. They are heavy, but they feel quite unobtrusive. The weight comes mainly from the substantial soles which make them the kind of boots you want to be wearing if you drop an Indian Chief or Harley Tour Glide on your foot.

Despite their weight and bulk, these boots look good and are easy to clean. The laces do take a little longer to sort out than a simple slip-on arrangement would, but the feel of the boots on my feet and calves makes up for it. On the other hand, their weight and bulk does make them buggers to take along on launches or organised tours, where luggage space tends to be restricted.

HIGH, LIGHT

When I’m trying to keep weight down and space is limited, I have backups for the Aerostich boots. These Axos are also high touring boots, and like the boots above, they owe part of their attraction to dirt bike boots. They do not have an outside clip; instead, there is a wire tightening system which is worked with a small wheel around calf height. That might sound clumsy but it works an absolute treat and fits the boots comfortably to your feet and calves.

Apart from being relatively light, the Axos are also attractively styled, with a suede or nubbuk panel which has short rubber tabs in it to prevent damage to the suede. There is a large, flexible concertina leather insert in the top to make walking comfortable, too. The area of hook-and-loop fastening is unusually large, which adds to the security of the fitting and makes it less likely that the material will wear out.



LOOKIN’ GOOD

When I’m supposed to look smart and a little less like a dedicated motorcyclist (and yes, sadly there are still times like that in the corporate world) I substitute a pair of Dainese boots for the Rossis. They are about the same height, but considerably slimmer and more fitted-looking. Fortunately, Dainese has managed to keep them comfortable despite making them look almost like ordinary shoes when trouser legs are covering their tops.

I presume that these would not be as safe in a truly horrendous crash as the Rossis, but I have no proof of that, or even any serious reason for thinking so. They’re just more lightly-made. Like the Rossis, I have had these boots for a long time and have worn them quite a bit, so some of the inset panels are shedding a little of their surface. That doesn’t affect the integrity of the boots. Despite being quite small, the hook-and-loop panels are in excellent condition.



DAY BY DAY

On my daily commute and for other short rides I wear a pair of Rossis, shorter than the touring boots. Rossi boots have been made in Australia by the Rossiter family for more than 100 years. They are strong and well-constructed, and their mid-height makes them easy to put on, take off and wear with almost all kinds of trousers. If I want to, I can even tuck my trouser legs into them – although I do that pretty seldom... You could describe these boots as “basic” but that would be a compliment, not a criticism.

This is my second pair of these. I made the mistake of taking the first pair to my local bootmaker instead of sending them to Rossi when the soles wore out, and he buggered them up. I’ve been more careful with the replacement pair, but I’ve had them for at least six years and the soles don’t look like they’re going to need replacing for another six – if then.

The Rossis are outstandingly comfortable, although they are heavy and look a bit clunky. That’s a direct result of the high level of safety they offer, so I’m not complaining.

COOL, MAN

I also have a pair of BMW boots, which I wear in summer. They have ventilating panels in them which actually work, despite looking as if they couldn’t possibly. I have been seriously impressed by the way BMW manages to produce heat-resistant clothing, and these boots are a perfect example. They also look pretty smart and could almost pass for shoes, once again with the tops hidden by trouser legs.

Like all BMW clothing these days, the boots are well made and strong despite being exceptionally light. Even the hook-and-loop panels, which were pretty ordinary in earlier generations of BMW gear, are excellent. Should you find yourself riding in rain or through water you will be reminded of the fact that these are summer boots, because your feet will instantly be wet. Not to worry, the boots dry out pretty quickly.



LACE-UP BACKUPS

Which brings us to the final occupants of my boot rack, the Alpine Star nubbuk lace-ups. These look least like motorcycle boots, but they are equipped with reinforcement which will help keep my precious feet and ankles safe. They take a little time to put on and take off, but they are comfortable and stay comfortable for a long time.

I got these boots for trips where as well as riding bikes, I would need to do a lot of walking or where I’d be sitting in aeroplanes for a long time, and they have earned their keep. With either the Aerostich or Axo boots packed and the Alpine Stars on my feet I know that I have the choice of two pairs of boots when I arrive at the launch or whatever. It’s a shame that they have lost a bit of the smart appearance they had when they were new, but that may well be due to my neglecting them...

IN CASE OF RAIN...

You will have noticed that I have not mentioned whether the boots are rainproof or not. There is a simple reason for that: it isn’t that easy. I have had boots which started out rainproof and eventually began to leak, and I have boots which began with no claim to waterproofing but which are now dry in the heaviest rain. During a test

we ran a while back, we found that it was not unusual for one of a pair of new boots to leak, while the other was dry.

I suggest you do what I do these days, and that is lavish plenty of Dubbin (or another sealant) on your boots. Obviously I do not use Dubbin on either the BMW or Alpine Star boots (the latter get a regular nubbuk

spray) but all my other boots benefit enormously from this black gold.

So there you go. You probably won’t need six pairs of boots, as I insist I do, but the above might give you some new ideas for what you do need (or want). Old boots for new ideas! Could have been a theme for Mr Kipling. PT ●

Australian

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#1 March 2013 Collectors' Edition / Tear-out map: Gold Country, Vic / The best motorcycle holiday / Bike tours you will love / Ducati Multistrada Touring / Triumph Street Triple R / BMW HP4 / Kawasaki Z800 / Suzuki Inazuma / Hyosung range / Suzuki DL650, BMW F 800 GS, Triumph Tiger 1050 / 6 touring essentials / 17 new bikes



#2 April 2013 Tear-out map: Sydney to Cowra / One Tank Touring – Australia the short way / Moto Guzzi California 1400 Touring / Triumph Trophy SE / Ducati Monster 1100 EVO / CF Moto 650NK / BMW C 650 GT / Go somewhere interesting in Australia / Dririder Vortex & Touratec Compagno suits / Great Japan Road Trip / Commuting for fun



#3 May 2013 Tear-out map: Adelaide Hills / Ride in comfort & safety in winter / BMW R 1200 GS Water Boxer / Riding Thunderbolts Way, the Flinders Ranges, Tasmania, Texas Qld / Kawasaki Versys 1000 / H-D Night Rod / Want to get into the bike business? / Husqvarna TR650 Terra & Strada / BMW F 800 GT / MG Cali 1400 Touring on tour



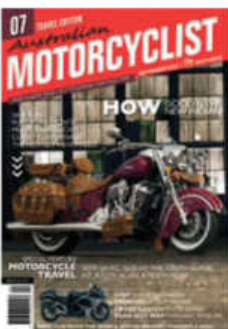
#4 June 2013 Tear-out map: Murrumbidgee / All you need to know about helmets / Travel the Savannah Way, Sydney's secret six destinations, Sabah's sensational square, chase the cheese / Yamaha FJR1300A / Honda CBR500R / Kawasaki KJLR 650 / Triumph Tiger 1050 / Honda Goldwing F6B / Victory Boardwalk / KTM 390 Duke / Triumph Street Triple



#5 July 2013 Tear-out map: The best of Victoria / Bear's Bucket List of Australian rides / The tyre advice you need / LAMS: Yamaha XV650, Kawasaki Ninja 300, Husqvarna TR 650 Terra, Ducati Monster 659 / KTM 1190 & 1190R Adventures / Tassie travels / Honda CB500F / Suzuki C90T / Ural Adventure tour / Yamaha XV1900AT



#6 August 2013 Tear-out map: Dorrigo delights / Get away on Ducati's Hyperstrada / Coffee & cake in NSW Southern Highlands / Getting the most out of your bike / Great Alpine Road, Vic / Aprilia RSV 4R & RSV4 Factory / New Triumph Tiger Sport / MG Cali 1400 Custom / Yamaha R15 / Horizons Unlimited meeting / Dirty Café Racer



#7 September 2013 Tear-out map: Margaret River, WA / Launching (but not yet riding) the new Indians / Save fuel / Special Feature: motorcycle travel – NSW, SA, VIC, QLD, NT, WA, Sth Island NZ, Route 66 / Throttle Roll / Classy customising / Suzuki Hayabusa / Aprilia Caponord / Kawasaki 1700 Classic / Pirelli Angel GT



#8 October 2013 Tear-out map: Grampians / Huge summer clothing survey / BMW F 800 GS A / We ride the new Rushmore Harleys / H-D LAMS bike announced / MV Agusta F4 RR is beautiful / Triumph Daytona 675 / Ducati Multi GT / Perth to Darwin with the Bear / Yamaha TMax 530 / Time for a trailer? / A leg up for the country



#9 November 2013 Tear-out map: Texas, Qld / Christmas gift guide / Can a Harley make you happy? / BMW K 1300 S / Ducati Diavel Strada / Kawasaki 1400 GTR / Yamaha Bolt / Suzuki Gladius / Aprilia SRV850 / Piaggio Beverly / Retro compare: V800, V7 & Bonneville / Bellarine Vic, Doctors gap NSW, Adelaide River Road NT / The Black Stump



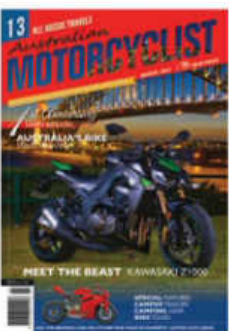
#10 December 2013 Tear-out map: Mudgee, NSW / Special summer reading issue / We ride the Indians / Honda CB500X / BMW K 1600 GT two up / Yamaha Super Tenere / Victory Highball / Suzuki Burgman / Piaggio Yourban / A Duke in Scotland / Grey Nomads around Australia / Himalaya / Triumph Tiger Cub – Triumph Tiger what!!



#11 January 2014 Tear-out map: Moree, NSW / 2014's new bikes straight from Milan / All about trailers / Triumph LAMS bike / H-D Super Glide / Yamaha MT-09 & MT-03 / BMW GS Safari Enduro / Part 3 of You Can Afford that Big Trip / Piaggio X10 / MOTOMania, your favourite cartoon, now every month / H-D Street 500 – Harley's LAMS bike



#12 February 2014 Tear-out map: Barmah, Vic / Buyers' guides: best Adventure bikes, top LAMS bikes / Triumph Explorer 1200 wire wheel / Honda CTX700N / Buy a Harley trike in Australia / Ural upgrade / Ride Alaska on a free bike / Meet Tex & Bundy / Bungle Bungle, WA / Two women and a BSA in 1952 / 10,000km with Grandpa



#13 March 2014 Tear-out map: Getting hot in NSW / All Aussie travels / Kawasaki Z1000 / Special features: camping gear, bike tours / Aprilia SRV850 vs Yamaha TMax / Ducati 1199 Panigale & Panigale S / Triumph Storm for touring / The Outback on a road bike / Tassie on a Postie / What happens at the big overseas bike shows?



#14 April 2014 Tear-out map: Brisbane and surrounds / We ride Ducati's mighty 1200S Monster / Suzuki V-Strom 1000 / Enjoying commuting / H-D Electraglide on tour / Kawasaki Ninja 1000 / Avon 3D ultra-sport tyre / One of the world's best choppers / Dirt trip: Dargo to Bright / Travelling Qld, NSW & VIC / The light side of border crossings



#15 May 2014 Tear-out map: Central Tasmania / Toughest test: two CFmoto 650s across Oz and back in six days / Big winter clothing survey / BMW R 1200 GS Adventure – with water / Aprilia Tuono ABS / Ducati 899 Panigale / Touring BMW C 650 GT / Chicks get their kicks on Route 66 / Lithgow dirt / Hearing protection



#16 June 2014 Two tear-out maps! Road: SE Vic & NSW, Adventure: Flinders Ranges / Top touring with BMW R 1200 RT / H-D Road King Classic / Spring is near – get ready / Katana memories / Touring all over Australia / H-D Fat Bob / The latest on Erik Buell / We launch MOTORCYCLIST tours / Choppers Australia / Ulysses shock



#17 July 2014 Tear-out maps: Road, Northern New England & Adventure, the Gibb River Road / Tyre Special / BMW RnineT / Ducati Monster 1200S / Triumph Commander LT / Yamaha Stryker & SR400 / Travel: Cairns, Bellingen, Alice Springs / New Buells and Benellis / We want a Yike Bike / Get the bike you want, not the one they build / Where can a postie bike take you?



#18 August 2014 Helmet Special / Tear-out maps: Adventure, Duck Creek Rd & Road, northern NSW / Electric Harley / Aprilia Caponord v Kawasaki Ninja 1000 / BMW S 1000 R / Ducati SF848 / Indian Vintage on tour / Kawasaki KLR 650 / Triumph Commander / Honda CBR 650F / Travel: Bombala, Oodnadatta Track, Riddoch Highway SA, Looking for the first oil well in California



#19 September 2014 Vale John Galvin / Indian Scout revealed / Lane filtering how to / Tear-out maps: Road, Outback NSW & Adventure the Watagans / Honda CTX1300 / Yamaha MT-09 / Kawasaki KLX150L / Honda VFR800F / Upgraded Ural outfits / Raider Motorcycles build your bike / Travel: NSW, New Zealand, California, Loaded Dog & Casper rallies / Twin Yamaha Bolts



#20 October 2014 Special feature Summer Riding: NZ, NSW, Vic / Boris joins us / KTM 1290 Superduke R / Suzuki V-Strom 1000 in the dirt / Ducati Multistrada Pikes Peak / Tear-out maps NZ and Tasmania / Melbourne's Gasolina / Glenn McGrath on his bike / Wintersun Rally



#21 November 2014 Summer Gear Guide / BMW K 1600 GTL / Yamaha MT-07 / KTM RC390 Launch / BMW RnineT / Zero SR electric / Tear-out maps Far North Qld & snowy Vic / Visiting the Centre / Rollios for accessories / What do we wear? / Which bike?



#22 December 2014 Christmas gift guide / 2015 bikes from Cologne / Victory Gunner / Ducati Monster 821 / Can-Am Spyder RT Limited SE6 / Kawasaki Vulcan 900 Classic / Tear-out maps FNQ Part 2 & around Bombala / Vietnam for 9 / Crossing borders can be fun / Bear Army



#23 January 2015 Rest of the 2015 bikes, from Milan / Indian Scout launch / Yamaha TriCity / CF Moto 650NK / Are sports bikes back? / Tear-out maps Putty Road & the Cape / Our Bombala Show / Melbourne-Adelaide the back way / The Bear travels with Edelweiss



#24 February 2015 Launch, Ducati Scrambler / Four new LAMS bikes: Triumph Street Triple, Enfield Café Racer, Kawa Vulcan S, Mercury / Travel to the Alps, Tibet, New Zealand, Malaysia – and Australia! / Shinko tyre test / Tear-out maps: Coober Pedy & Bingara / Pimp your Beemer / Where to meet your mates all over Oz



#25 March 2015 Tests Kawasaki Versys 1000 & H-D Street 500 / A girl's tour of Oz / Visiting Brembo / Tear-out maps: following the Darling & back roads of Omeo / All about organised motorcycle tours / travel around Sydney and the SA Limestone Coast / Boris at Bombala / Zero supplies police bikes / Pub tales from all over



#26 April 2015 Special features: all about commuting & camping roundup / 17 bikes to ride to work with pride / Launch Yamaha R1, R1M / Our South Island NZ tour, part 1 / Launch Yamaha MT-09 Tracer / Tear-out maps: Nowra to Cooma & way out WA / BMW's beginner bike revealed / Pirelli tyre test / Adelaide's Old Road



#27 May 2015 Huge Winter Guide: 44 ways for you to stay warm / Six LAMS bikes from Kawasaki / Launch BMW S 1000 RR, R 1200 R, F 800 R / Inspect a Gadget / Horizons Unlimited get-together / Suzuki Burgman 200 / Tear-out maps: more around Omeo & Fraser Island / Adventure Film Festival / Melbourne-Sydney on a V-Strom 650 XT



#28 June 2015 Special feature: bike maintenance. Travel: Unknown Route 66, Cooma, Walcha, SA. Tear-Out Maps: Darling Downs, Tasmania East Coast, Triumph Tiger XCx, Yamaha MT-09 Sport Tracker, Suzuki V-Strom 650 XT. Comparo tourers: Ducati, Kawasaki, Triumph, BMW & Yamaha. HOG 2015. GPS on your phone. Skill Master.



#29 July 2015 Special Feature: Improve your bike. Aprilia Caponord Rally, Victory Magnum, Triumph Tiger XRx, Yamaha Bolt C-Spec, Honda Valkyrie. Taylors Arm, the real pub with no beer. Travel: top of Oz, Victoria, NSW. Isle of Man pullout poster; we salute Aussie TT heroes. Pirelli Angel GT test. Savannah Way.



#30 August 2015 All about tyres. Shipping your bike. Ducati Multistrada 1200 DVT, Yamaha R3. Maps: WA coast and inland NSW. Alpine Rally. Beautiful Bloody Balkans tour, Bridle Track NSW, Toompine pub. Commuting costs: Holden v Aprilia. Classic BMW R 7. Kuryakyn Sportster 72 – customising with the best

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VALE ERIC HINTON

MOTORCYCLE RACING LOSES A GENTLEMAN

WORDS LESTER MORRIS

The more mature motorcyclists amongst us with long memories were saddened to hear of the passing of Eric Hinton, who was one of our finest motorcycle racers in a Golden Era from the mid-fifties to the early seventies. Eric died on 17th December, 2015, from the complications of some years of Parkinson's disease, exacerbated by a recent stroke. Eric is survived by his wife of nearly 60 years, Kathleen, his younger brother Robert, his sons Tony and Peter Hinton and four grandchildren. Family members were at his bedside when he passed away peacefully at Sydney's Westmead Hospital. He was 81 years of age.

Eric began his racing career in 1952 with some success on the Castlereagh and Mount Druitt 'sprint' airstrips, but really made his mark by gaining a brave third place on a standard OHV ES2 Norton in the nigh-forgotten 1954 'Redex Round Australia Trial'. The one-off event began and finished in Sydney's Parramatta Park. It was to run for eight grim days, and it covered some 4000km through Melbourne and Adelaide and Broken Hill, over terrain which ranged from some sealed road surfaces to the occasional - often unsealed - 'main' road and rough bush tracks. The challenging event was held during some of the worst weather conditions the area had ever encountered, with driving rain, fierce winds and cloying mud on some tenth-rate rural roads, allied to heavy snow and ice in some other areas,

the riders expected to be able to ride at average speeds of 32mph during those shocking conditions.



Eric raised a few eyebrows in 1955 when he defeated the visiting world Champion Geoff Duke in a Handicap race at Bandiana, Hinton starting 45 seconds ahead. The 24-year old local rider was mounted on a highly-tuned

'road-going' single-cylinder OHC International Norton, tuned by his father, while Duke was mounted on his Championship-winning four-cylinder DOHC factory Gilera.

When his father, the legendary Harry Hinton Senior, 17 times winner of major events at Bathurst and countless others on many other circuits, including the UK in the 1951-2 season, retired in 1955 after winning the three major events at the Bathurst Easter Meeting, Harry's ex-factory Manx Nortons were 'passed down' to Eric and his older brother, Harry Junior. Young Eric celebrated the receipt of these legendary machines by winning the 350 and 500cc Australian TT titles on the 'works' machines at the fast, if dangerous, tree-lined Southport circuit, almost instantly establishing himself as a top-flight road racing motorcyclist. His brother Harry finished second in the 350cc event

Although there were no 'full time' specialist motorcycle publications to speak of in those days - a few were published spasmodically - Eric's sudden rise to prominence didn't escape notice, for the sport's governing body at the time, the Auto Cycle Council of Australia (ACCA) noted his sudden rise to fame at Southport by including him the official 1956 Australian team to ride at the Isle of Man and in other major events in Europe.

Previous to his ride on the Isle, Eric managed a great second place on his brand-new 250cc, single-cylinder NSU



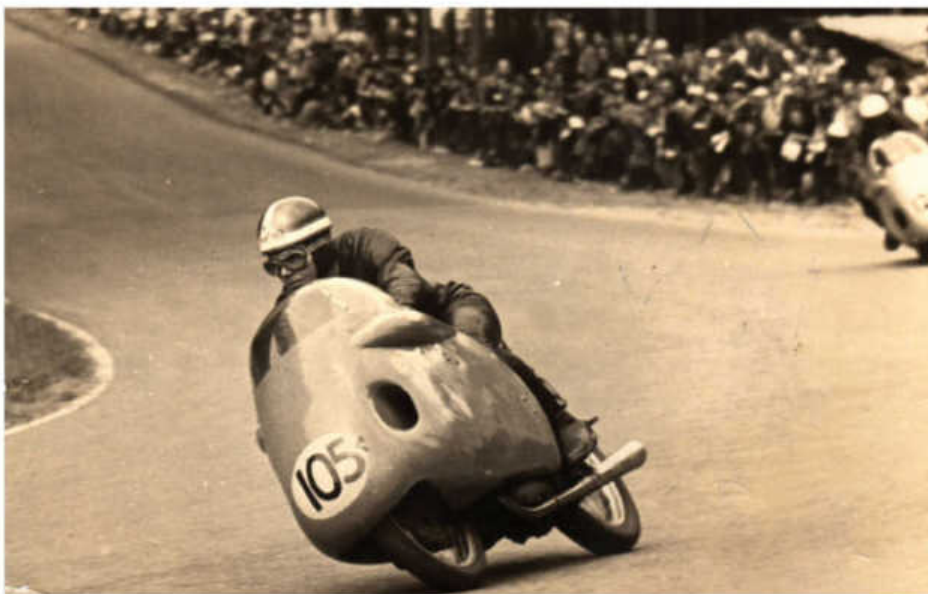
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Sportmax production racer in the International North West 200, on the rain-swept, high-speed Ulster circuit in Ireland. After breaking the circuit's lap record, he had fallen during the race, but re-mounted to finish behind the legendary Sammy Miller, who was also NSU mounted. Eric had engine trouble with his Norton on the Isle, so he did not figure prominently in the results, but he came home to again record an impressive series of podium finishes in three of the major title events in the Australian GP at Mildura on Boxing Day in 1956. He was second in the 350cc, 500cc and Unlimited races. Brother Harry beat him in the 350cc event, while the Australian Keith Campbell – who was to become world 350cc Champion in 1957 – walked away with the 500cc and Unlimited titles on his works Moto Guzzi.

Still in the 'off' season with snow and ice on the race circuits in Europe Eric rode at the Easter meeting in Bathurst, easily winning the 500cc event (his first Bathurst win) then took off for Europe yet again, where the long arm of co-incidence reached out to tap him on the shoulder in the most dramatic manner.

In 1956, while leading the 250cc race at the wet Bathurst meeting by the proverbial 'country mile', Jack Forrest had been lining up the fast McPhillamy Park corner on the last lap, when the sump plug dropped out of this ex-works NSU Sportmax, which immediately bathed the machine's rear wheel in a large amount of very hot oil. Nearly out of control, Forrest fought the bike almost to a standstill, but it bumped into the Park's entrance gate head-on at walking speed, pelting Forrest over the handlebars. He swiftly re-mounted and flashed away, the machine fish-tailing all over the circuit. He won the race with the engine still running, but with no oil whatsoever in the sump!

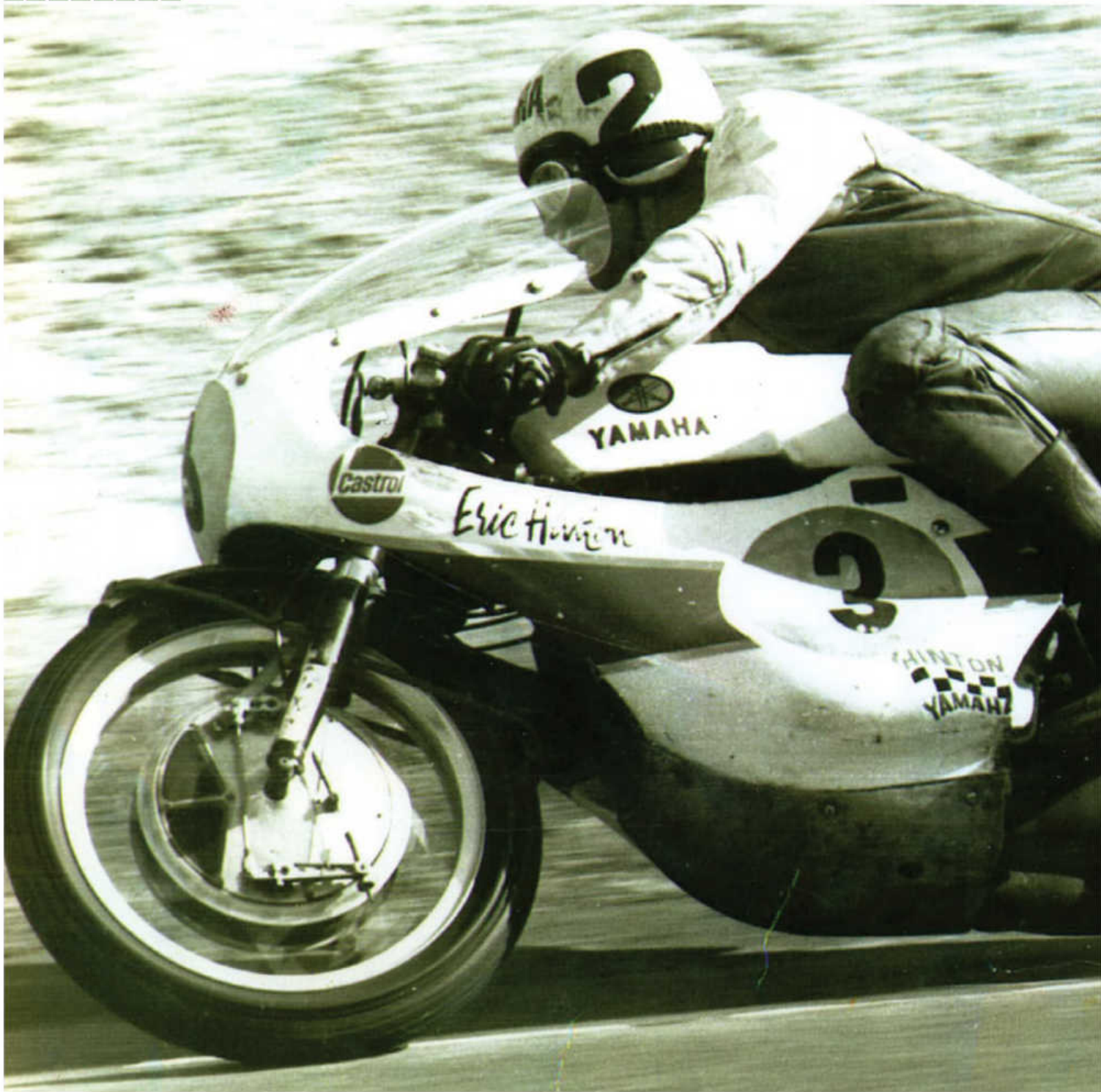


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How is that linked to Eric? Read on! Early in 1957 Eric rode to impressive victories in several important events, firstly the 500cc main event at England's Mallory Park, with a third place in the 350 event, then the International Saar Grand Prix in Germany a few weeks later, where he was second in the 250

race, and won both 350 and 500cc events at record speeds.

Just a few weeks later, he was riding the swift little NSU on the highly-dangerous, viciously-fast Hockenheim circuit when disaster struck. In those days, part of the track was a looping, sealed road which ran directly through

a large pine forest, where enormous speeds on two wheels or four were easily achieved. There were, of course, no 'run-off' areas and no safety fences anywhere in the forest.

Chin on the tank, elbows and knees tucked in behind the slim fairing, he was flat-out on the little NSU when

HORNET ADV

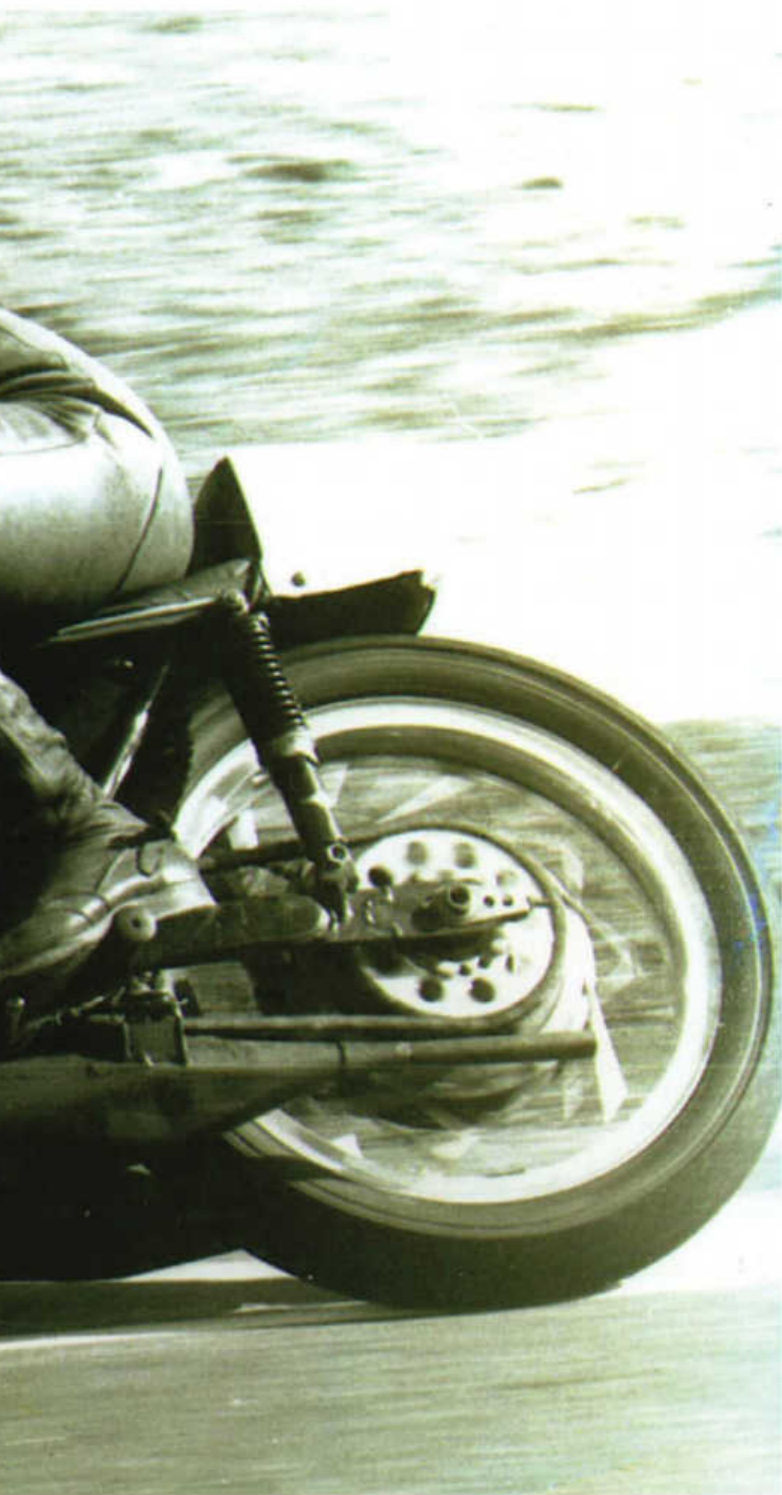
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suddenly – as if in an encore to Jack Forrest's mishap – the sump plug fell out, spewing oil all over the rear wheel. At a speed which must have been pushing 200km/h the bike speared off into the pine forest and disappeared! To Eric's eternal credit, he remained under some measure of control and didn't crash or fall off, but he nudged into many a tree trunk on his journey before he slid to a stop, injuring both legs in the process!

There is no doubt that those racing circuits of old, no matter where they were situated, were very dangerous places indeed if one got into trouble, for run-off areas and safety fences were little known, if known at all, back in the heady days of the '50s to '70s.

Many a lesser mortal would have thanked whatever Deity he believed in and decided to never again grace the saddle of any



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racing motorcycle after that incident at Hockenheim, but Eric Hinton was clearly made of sterner stuff. A matter of weeks later he managed a fine fifth place in the 350cc race on the Isle of Man - the first 'privateer' to finish. He was in sixth place in the 500cc event when he slipped off, fortunately without injury. Back in Australia in late December he was still at it, winning the Senior (500cc) Australian TT on the fast Phillip Island circuit.

Eric was almost a commuter between England and Australia for many years thereafter, for he rode to a variety of wins and podium finishes in many races both overseas in and in Australia, including his great 500cc victory in the 1959 Czech GP, his most impressive win Internationally. Sadly, he lost his brother that same year, when Harry Jnr was killed while competing in a major event in Italy; Eric arriving at his brother's bedside just hours after he had passed away.

Eric won, or was on the podium, in very many other events Internationally, although he never figured prominently

in World Championship events. He confined himself mostly to the more 'profitable', almost-weekly major events which were probably only a step below GP races, while many a top-flight rider from those higher-profile GP races also competed on that level. If he could beat them on only 'privateer' or 'semi-works' machinery, which he was quite capable of doing on occasion, then why not in major GP events? Why not, indeed!

His International career, which began with a bang in 1956, ended when he finally called it quits in 1969 and came home to Oz for good.

He 'retired' from racing in the early '70s, while still giving a good account of himself on the new two-stroke TR3 Yamaha racers, but always maintained that his little 250 NSU was by far his favourite bike. He remained a force behind the scenes for many years thereafter, fettling his younger brother Robert's bikes, on which Rob Hinton was so successful in keeping the name alive. Eric assisted his two young sons as well, while continuing to give a hand, or helpful advice, to anyone who sought it.

Some measure of the high regard in which Eric Hinton was held was contained within the long list of emailed messages which Ross Hannon read out at the funeral. Messages had come in from as far afield as England, Europe and America, all noting, among other things, that the young Hinton was a real gentleman off the track - even if he was a hard, tough rider when competing at the highest level on the track.

Rob Hinton told the assemblage that he reckoned Eric was responsible for his (Rob's) successful career, and that his brother was the smartest man he had ever known. As a highly skilled toolmaker/engineer, we were told, Eric could fabricate any engine component he needed, from gears and gearbox selector mechanisms to pistons and complete crankcases, whenever the original parts were not readily available. It's a fair bet that Hinton pistons could still be found in many a competition machine today!

Our thanks to Tony Hinton for the photographs illustrating this story. All photos are Copyright@HintonFamily. ●

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WE LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU, the letters are among the most keenly read parts of the magazine. Please try and keep letters down to no more than 300 words. Then you can read many, not just a couple. We do reserve the right to cut them and, unless you identify yourself and at least your town or suburb and state, we will print your email address instead. **Please address letters to thebear@ausmotorcyclist.com.au or Australian Motorcyclist Magazine, PO Box 2066, Boronia Park NSW 2111.** All opinions published here are those of the writers and we do not vouch for their accuracy or even their sanity!



As you probably know by now, we give away one of Andy Strapz' famous Shoulda Bagz to the writer of the (highly subjective) best letter of the month. This time, it

goes to a letter that has really made us think. What can you do with old helmets? Josh gets the bag, and you get the chance to make (printable) suggestions.

GREEN HATS

Hi Bear,
Do you know of any any "green" or otherwise sound methods of reusing or repurposing old motorcycle helmets? There isn't too much on the interwebs aside from using them for arts and crafts... but that's

not my thing.
Any suggestions?
Cheers,
Josh
Drummoyne NSW

You know, Josh, that's an excellent question. I have always just cut the straps and dumped old helmets into the rubbish; it would be terrific if there was another use for them. I'll run your letter and ask for suggestions; I'm afraid I can't think of any off the, er, top of my head – The Bear

NO TOES HERE

In Defence Of Boris (as if he needed it!).
With regards to comments about Boris' contribution to AMM (#35 Jan 2016 What Say You).
I would state that I don't know Boris, or thoroughly agree with his opinions, or share his riding style (I'm sure I would fit somewhere within his view of BMW riders, not sure about the vague urine smell though!) or for that matter have a (suppressed) desire to be a 1%er, despite the fact that I have been riding as long as he has. I do in fact look forward to reading his views of the motorcycling world, and his humorous stories gained from a life on two wheels. I do also support his right to write about a subject in whichever way he sees fit.
If you don't like his writings, it's pretty easy to skip over them and

enjoy an otherwise bloody great magazine. One of the great things about this magazine is its ability to keep all the 'fluff' out of it. I don't want to buy a mag that is half full of race results! Speaking for myself, if I wanted to read a bike mag which completely 'toes the line' and doesn't upset anyone, I'd go out and buy Australian Motorcycle News, which sadly, has become the bike equivalent of Woman's Weekly.
We are living in a world in which the System (insert Empire) increasing pushes the idea of self-censorship. Make sure you don't offend anyone or make them feel 'icky'. An idea perpetuated by the mainstream media, which increasingly tells people what to say, what to think and what to buy. Boris, myself or any of you for that matter, may not choose to use certain references or terms, but we all

should still have the right to use them if we choose to. What the hell is this Nanny-State doing to this Country? I would say one last thing, I would stand in front of any barricade in any street beside Boris and his brothers-in- arms to defend the right of free speech in this Country.
John Fox
Bathurst
Bear Army #21 (and proud of it!)

Couldn't agree with you more, John, except I'd stand behind the barricade – The Bear

WATERHOLE, LEDS & BORIS

Good morning, Stuart and a Happy New Year to you and His Bearness. Re. the photos.
About half way between the Isa and the 'Curry is the Fountain Springs rest area. About 100 metres east of that, on the southern side, is a wide dirt

0021 + years

WOW!

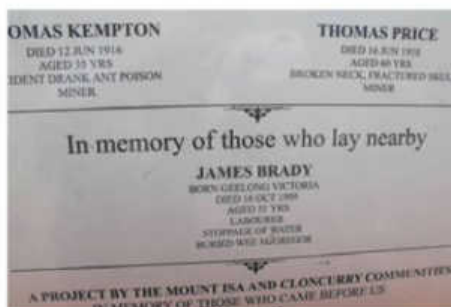
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road, the opening heavily posted with warnings about mining operations. As I understand, it is a public way. Note the warnings because the trucks on it are 3 or 4 trailer trains having two speeds - fast or Jeezis! The Fountain Springs waterhole is about 32 km in but before that there is much evidence of old mining activity - open cut and shaft - and a track along the old rail bed up



to a tunnel west through the range. From vague memory this re-joins the Flinders H/way east of the East Leichhardt River. GS riders will have an opportunity to stand. There are plenty of information plaques, the area has been well cleared, probably for safety, and it makes the whole more interesting. A bunch of us used to ride there in the '60s and we never found a fraction of what is easily seen now. I did break an ankle and wrist and cracked a few ribs there when the DT-1 force-fed me under a closed gate but that's another story. On LED light bars: Are there any clear comments on their effectiveness at showing grey animals? Our grey dog nearly disappears in LED light - only watery-pink eyes show and Eastern Grey kangaroos are properly so named. We've no shortage of them out here.



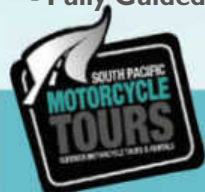
On Boris: I read a comment, many years ago, by some American chap reviewing a book of English Comic Verse. To paraphrase him - "When I get up I read a page or two and if I laugh I know that things are fine. If I merely smile I watch myself and if I don't even smile I take a dose of salts!" That's how I find Boris. If he gets to me I re-check my attitude settings. Still on Boris; there's his review, on his Bike Me site, of the Aprillia Tuono RR. Now that's how a sports bike should be reviewed! Ok, I'll get out of your hair. Cheers and best wishes for another 12 months.

Ross Halpin.
Mitchell Qld

Thanks for the suggestion, Ross. Next time I'm up between Mt Isa and Cloncurry I'll be sure to go and have a look at Fountain Springs waterhole. Does anyone know anything about that effect of LEDs? - The Bear

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EVEN MORE GORGE-OUS

Hi Bear,
I've just received my copy of AMM #35. I noticed on the front cover "SA by Road and Dirt", I thought here we go again, more stories about the absolutely magic Adelaide Hills, now over-run with 80k speed limits. But Joy, I got to the map and saw that it was of the Southern Flinders. My heart was racing; was "the best motorbike road" in Australia going to be exposed. No, it wasn't, so after a coldy or two I decided to "share" what you missed out. This road is called by various names including; the Pt. Germein Gorge, or the "official" Pt. Germein – Murray Town Road. Whilst a bit bumpy it is bliss. So I would suggest starting from Pt.

Pirie, Turning right onto Pt. Germein Gorge, then from Murray Town up to Wilmington, then head West on Horrocks Pass, yes it's much better in this direction. Then up to Stirling North through Pichi Richi Pass (the often vandalised sign – where the first letter of each word was removed, is no longer there). Then once at Hawker one would OBVIOUSLY continue up to Blinman. If it wasn't for the wild-life, the road from Wilpena Pound to Blinman would be the "undisputed" best bike road in Australia. By the way, I quite clearly remember water in the brooks' Crystal and Nectar, admittedly many many years ago.
Cheers,
PAPPY.

C.E. Paproth, Bear army trooper #46.

Well, Pappy, I've ridden the Germein Gorge road. Like you, I found it bumpy but a lovely run. I am wondering if the fact that I haven't included it in my listing of great bike roads (and in the Motorcycle Atlas) is that I had a vicious hangover at the time... - The Bear

WHAT IS THAT THING?

Hi Stuart, Happy New Year. Have received the gift for subscription renewal for my hubby. He opened it and said WTF - this is a bit of a mystery. Is it a huge ID or a luggage ID, or an event ID. It has certainly kept us guessing to its possible uses. Hope you can enlighten us. Really enjoying your mag. it always has interesting articles and routes to follow. Keep it up.
Cheers
Yvonne

Hi Yvonne, Happy New Year! Maybe I should keep you guys guessing? That



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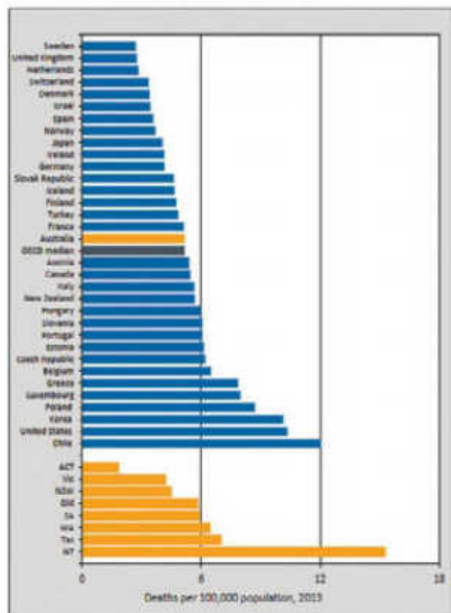
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Road Deaths per 100,000 population

in fatality rate - see graph - so I think he's being unfairly critical of Vision Zero, which does have some good ideas. Claes Tingvall has retired so maybe bikes in Sweden do have a future? See you on a ride! Cheers Jack

Jack, I know that Sweden's road toll is low. But it isn't absolute numbers we're interested in, it's precisely fatality rate reductions, because that's how Vision Zero's effect is best measured. As for good ideas - the plan is comprehensive and is intended to be implemented like that; you can't pick and choose. If you do it's no longer Vision Zero. -The Bear

URAL NOW RICHER AND COOLER

Hi Peter,
I trust you are well and enjoying the run up to Christmas.
I would like to inform you that you just missed getting the new EFI mapping on our cT test bike.
There has been, since first EFI bikes

came out last year, some issues with carburetion being a little lean, and some hesitancy and uneven running as the bike comes off idle.

The new mapping for the EFI has the bikes staying in closed loop until revs get up off idle which stopped the sensors constantly trying to over adjust the mixture and causing problems. Also, the higher rev range now runs a little richer to keep the motor cooler. The overall result is a huge improvement. Combined with the excellent reliability of the Electrojet ECU system we are experiencing, it now runs smoothly and reliably throughout the rev range. Now all we need is the exchange rate to get back up in the 90 cent zone!!

Best Regards

Jon
Ural of Oz

I don't recall anything serious in the way of uneven running, but I thought I'd better include this letter to let anyone who's interested in a Ural know that the factory keeps working on making them better - The Bear ●

would be a laugh! It's actually a waterproof smartphone cover. You can also use your phone as normal through the cover. Glad you enjoy the mag - Stuart

POSITIVE ZERO?

Hi Stu
The Bear uses fatality rate reductions rather than absolute numbers - it is easier to get a significant percentage reduction from a large number than a small number. Sweden leads the world

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New motorcycle prices go up, they go down. It can be hard to keep track of all the changes. Australian Motorcyclist Magazine supplies you with all the latest up to date prices

from all the manufacturers currently in the country. Things like special deals, cashbacks, factory discounts and bonuses are what you'll find. Bear in mind

all prices (unless indicated) exclude dealer and on road costs and some prices may have changed at the last minute as we went to the printer.

APRILIA

www.aprilia.com.au

ROAD

RS4 125	\$5100
RS4 125 SBK	\$6250
Shiver Sport 750 ABS	\$12,990
Dorsoduro 750 ABS	\$11,990
Dorsoduro Factory ABS	\$15,690
Mana 850 Automatic	\$15,990
Tuono V4 1100 RR	\$23,000
Tuono V4 1100 Factory	\$25,000
RSV4 RR	\$25,000
RSV4 RR Race Pack	\$31,000
RSV4 RF LE	\$31,000
Dorsoduro 1200 ABS	\$13,990

ADV SPORT

Caponord 1200 ABS	\$21,490
Caponord 1200 Rally	\$24,000

SCOOTERS

Sportcity One 125	\$2990
SR MT 125	\$3290
Mojito 125	\$4990
Scarabeo 200 ie	\$4850
Sportcity Cube 300	\$6290
Sportcity 300 Street	\$6290
Scarabeo 300 ie	\$6490
SR Max 300	\$6490
Scarabeo 500 ie	\$8490
SRV850	\$14,990

BENELLI

www.benelli.com.au

ROAD

BN 302	\$5590
Leoncino	\$TBA
BN600i	\$8990
BN600S	\$8990
BN600GT	\$8990
BN600GTS	\$8990
BN600R	\$9990
BN600RS	\$9990
TnT 899	\$16,990
TnT 1130 R	\$22,690
Tre-K 1130	\$18,490

ADV TOURING

Tre-K Amazonas	\$19,690
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BIMOTA

www.bimotaaustralia.com.au

ROAD

DB5R	\$37,990
DB10	\$37,290
DB9	\$44,990
DB9 S	\$46,990
Tesi 3D Naked	\$55,990
Tesi Race Café	\$TBA
DB11	\$56,990
BB3	\$72,888
DB8 OroNero	\$84,990

BMW

www.bmwmotorrad.com.au

ROAD

G 310 R	\$TBA
F 800 R	\$13,100
F 800 GT	\$16,300
S 1000 R	\$19,290
S 1000 RR	\$22,990
R Nine T	\$21,250
R 1200 R	\$21,950
R 1200 R Sport	\$22,350
R 1200 R Exclusive	\$22,350
R 1200 RS	\$22,950
R 1200 RS Exclusive	\$23,250
R 1200 RT	\$30,790
K 1300 R	\$21,990
K 1300 S	\$23,990
K 1300 S Motorsport	\$28,990
K 1600 GT	\$35,990
K 1600 GT Sport	\$36,490
K 1600 GTL	\$37,590
K 1600 GTL Exclusive	\$42,500

ADV SPORT

S 1000 XR	\$22,190
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ADV TOURING

G 650 GS	\$9990
G 650 GS Sertao	\$10,990
F 700 GS	\$12,890
F 700 GS LS	\$13,140
F 800 GS	\$16,690

F 800 GS LS	\$16,940
F 800 GSA	\$18,650
R 1200 GS	\$21,950
R 1200 GSA	\$24,550

SCOOTER

C 600 Sport	\$13,990
C 600 Sport SE	\$15,090
C 650 GT	\$14,990
C 650 GT SE	\$16,665
C 650 GT SE LS	\$16,465

BRAAAP

www.braaapmotorcycles.com

ROAD

Street Superlite 125	\$2999
Mercury	\$3999

CAN-AM (BRP)

www.brp.com

*All prices are ride away

ROAD

Spyder RS SM5	\$19,990
Spyder RS S Red SE5	\$23,990
Spyder RS S Wht SE5	\$23,990
F3S SM5	\$25,790
F3S SE5	\$28,890
Spyder ST S SE5	\$25,490
Spyder ST Ltd SE5	\$28,990
Spyder RT SM6	\$31,490
Spyder RT S SE6	\$39,990
Spyder RT Ltd SE6	\$41,990

CF MOTO

www.cf-moto.com.au

ROAD

V-Night 150	\$2690
Leader	\$2190
650NK	\$5990
650TK	\$7990

CRUISER

V5	\$3990
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SCOOTER

Jetmax 250	\$4190
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CONFEDERATE MOTORCYCLES

www.confederate.com.au

ROAD

X132 Hellcat	\$79,990
X132 Hellcat Combat	\$94,990
X132 Hellcat Speedster	\$POA
R131 Fighter	\$POA
R135 Wraith Combat	\$POA

DAELIM

www.daelim.com.au

ROAD

VJF250	\$4490
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SCOOTER

Bbone	\$3490
Besbi	\$2190
S1	\$3290

DERBI

www.derbinos.com.au

SCOOTER

GPI 250	\$6299
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DUCATI

www.ducati.com.au

ROAD

Monster 659 ABS	\$12,990
Scrambler Sixty2	\$TBA
Scrambler Icon (Red)	\$12,990
Scrambler Icon (Yellow)	\$13,140
Scrambler Classic	\$14,990
Scrambler Urban Enduro	\$14,990
Scrambler Full Throttle	\$14,990
Scrambler Flat Tracker	\$TBA
Hypermotard Red	\$16,990
Hypermotard Black	\$17,290
Hyperstrada	\$17,990
Monster 821 Dark	\$16,290
Monster 821 Red	\$16,790
Monster 821 White	\$16,990
Monster 821 Stripes	\$17,990
Streetfighter 848	\$17,490

Panigale 899 Red	\$19,990
Panigale 899 White	\$20,490
Panigale 959	\$TBA
Hypermotard SP	\$21,490
Monster 1200	\$19,990
Monster 1200 S Red	\$24,290
Monster 1200 S White	\$24,490
Monster 1200 Stripes	\$25,490
Diavel	\$24,490
Diavel Red	\$24,990
Diavel Carbon Red	\$30,290
Diavel Carbon White	\$30,290
Diavel Titanium	\$39,990
XDiavel	\$TBA
Panigale 1299	\$27,990
Panigale 1299 S	\$34,990
Panigale R	\$45,990

ADV TOURING

Multistrada 1200 DVT	\$23,990
Multistrada 1200 Enduro	\$TBA
Multistrada 1200 S DVT R	\$27,990
Multistrada 1200 S DVT W	\$28,490

ERIK BUELL RACING

www.erikbuellracing.com.au

ROAD

I190RX	\$26,490
I190SX	\$23,490
I190RS Carbon	\$56,990

HARLEY-DAVIDSON

www.harley-davidson.com

*All Harley-Davidson prices are ride away

CRUISER

Street 500	\$10,750
XL883L SuperLow	\$14,995
XL883N Iron 883	\$14,995
XL1200V Seventy-Two	\$18,495
XL1200C Custom	\$18,750
XL1200X Forty-Eight	\$19,250
XL1200T SuperLow	\$19,495
FXDB Street Bob	\$22,495
FXDL Low Rider	\$23,495
FXDB Street Bob Special	\$23,995
FXDWG Wide Glide	\$24,995
FXDF Fat Bob	\$25,495
FLD Switchback	\$26,250
FLS Softail Slim	\$26,495
FLSS Softail Slim S	\$28,995
FLSTFB Fat Boy Lo	\$28,995
FLSTF Fat Boy	\$29,250
FLSTFBS Fat Boy S	\$31,495
FLSTN Softail Deluxe	\$29,250
FXSB Breakout	\$29,750
FLSTC Heritage Softail Classic	\$32,250
FLHR Road King	\$32,495
FLTRXS Road Glide Special	\$34,750
FLHXS Street Glide Special	\$34,995
FLHTK Ultra Limited	\$38,250
VRSC Muscle	\$27,495
VRSC Night Rod Special	\$27,995

CVO

FLHXSE Street Glide	\$47,495
FLTRUSE Road Glide Ultra	\$48,995
FLHTKSE Ultra Limited	\$50,995

HONDA

<http://motorcycles.honda.com.au>

ROAD

CB125E	\$2099
CB300F	\$5699
CBR300R	\$5699
CBR300R ABS	\$5999
CBR300R SE	\$5799
CBR300R ABS SE	\$6099
CB400	\$10,099
CB400A ABS	\$11,199
CB500F	\$7499
CBR500R	\$7499
CBR500R ABS	\$7799
CBR600RR	\$14,390
CB650F ABS	\$9999
CBR650F ABS	\$10,599
NC700SA ABS	\$8550
CTX700A ABS	\$7399
CTX700D ABS DCT	\$10,899
NC750SA ABS	\$8799
VFR800F	\$14,599
CBR1000RR	\$16,899
CBR1000RR ABS	\$17,899
CBR1000RR SP	\$22,499

CBR1000RR SP Marquez \$22,499
VFR1200F ABS \$16,999
CTX1300 \$18,499
Goldwing F6B \$25,199
GL1800 Goldwing Luxury \$35,799
CRUISER
VT400 \$9399
CTX700NA ABS \$9099
VT750C Shadow \$11,749
VT1300CXA Fury \$15,599
GL1800 Valkyrie \$20,199
ADV TOURING
CB500X \$7599
VFR800X Crossrunner \$14,499
VFR1200X \$17,499
Africa Twin \$TBA
SCOOTER
NSC110 Dio \$2549
PCX150 \$4199
NSS300A Forza \$6999
NC750D Integra \$11,199

HOSSTYLE CYCLES

www.hosstylecycles.com.au

Barbarian V8 \$45,000

HUNTER

www.huntermotorcycles.com.au

CRUISER
Daytona \$6990
Spyder \$6990
Bobber \$7299

HUSQVARNA

www.husqvarnamotorcycles.com.au

ROAD
TR 650 Strada \$7995
ADV TOURING
TR 650 Terra \$8495

HYOSUNG

www.hyosung.com.au

ROAD
GT250 \$4990
GT250R \$5490
GT650 \$6990
GT650R \$7490
CRUISER
GV250 Aquila \$5490
GV650S Aquila Sport \$7990
GV650C Aquila Classic \$7990

INDIAN

www.indianmotorcycles.com.au

*All Indian Motorcycle prices are ride away

CRUISER
Scout Sixty \$TBA
Scout \$17,995
Chief Dark Horse \$26,995
Chief Classic \$28,995
Chief Vintage \$31,495
Chieftain \$35,995
Chief Roadmaster \$38,995

KAWASAKI

www.kawasaki.com.au

ROAD
Z250SL \$5299
Z250SL ABS \$5599
Z300 ABS \$5999
Ninja 300 \$5799
Ninja 300 SE KRT \$5999
Ninja 300 ABS \$6199
Ninja 300 SE KRT ABS \$6399
ER-6n/nL ABS \$9499

Versys 650/L ABS \$10,199
Ninja 650/L ABS \$9999
Ninja ZX-6R \$14,999
Ninja ZX-6R 636 ABS \$16,499
Ninja ZX-6R 636 KRT \$16,649
W800 SE \$12,499
Z800 ABS \$12,999
Z1000 ABS SE \$15,499
Ninja 1000 ABS \$15,999
Ninja ZX-10R \$22,000
Ninja ZX-10R ABS \$23,000
Ninja ZX-10R Winter \$23,200
Ninja ZX-14R ABS \$19,999
Ninja ZX-14R ABS Ohlins \$22,099
1400GTR ABS \$24,999
H2 \$33,000
CRUISER
Vulcan S ABS \$9999
Vulcan S ABS Café \$10,199
Vulcan 900 Classic \$12,499
Vulcan 900 Custom \$12,499
Vulcan 1700 Classic ABS \$19,999
Vulcan 1700 Vaquero ABS \$24,499
ADV TOURING
KLR650 \$8099
KLR650 Camo \$8199
Versys 1000 ABS \$15,999

KTM

www.ktm.com.au

ROAD
390 Duke \$6495
RC390 \$8295
690 Duke R \$13,495
690 SMC R \$14,395
1290 Super Duke R \$23,490
1290 Super Duke R SE \$TBA
1290 Super Duke GT \$TBA
ADV TOURING
690 Enduro R \$14,395
1050 Adventure \$18,995
1190 Adventure \$20,995
1190 Adventure R \$21,995
1290 Super Adventure \$26,995

KYMC

kymco.com.au

ROAD
CK 125 \$2095
CRUISER
Venox 250 \$5295
SCOOTER
Super 8 125 \$2595
Like 125 \$2995
Espresso 150 \$2799
Like 200 \$3395
Downtown 300i ABS \$7495

LARO

www.laro.com.au

ROAD
R11 250 \$4750
Venom 350 \$4990
CRUISER
Cruiser 350 \$5290
Pro Street 350 \$6990

MOTO GUZZI

www.motoguzzi.com.au

ROAD
V7 Stone \$12,490
V7 Special \$12,990
V7 Racer S.E. \$14,990
V9 Bobber \$TBA
V9 Roamer \$TBA
1200 Sport 8V SE \$17,490

Griso 1200 8V SE ABS \$19,490
Norge GT 8V ABS \$20,990
CRUISER
Bellagio 940 \$16,990
California 1400 Audace \$23,500
California 1400 Eldorado \$24,000
California 1400 Custom \$21,490
California 1400 Touring \$24,490
Cali 1400 Touring SE \$26,500
MGX-21 \$TBA
ADV TOURING
Stelvio 1200 8V ABS \$19,990
Stelvio 1200 8V NTX ABS \$21,490

MV AGUSTA

www.mvagusta.com.au

ROAD
Brutale 675 \$15,799
F3 675 \$18,699
Brutale 800 \$18,699
Brutale 800 RR \$19,999
Brutale 800 Dragster \$20,499
Brutale 800 Dragster RR \$23,499
Dragster RR LH44 \$36,880
F3 800 \$19,999
F3 800 RC \$23,490
Stradale 800 \$19,999
Turismo Veloce 800 \$20,499
Turismo Veloce Lusso 800 \$23,499
Brutale 1090 \$19,999
Brutale 1090 RR \$22,999
Brutale 1090 Corsa \$27,999
F4 \$24,499
F4 RR \$33,999
F4 RC \$55,880

NORTON

www.frasermotorcycles.com.au

Commando 961 Sport \$29,990
Commando 961 Café \$33,990
Commander 961 SF \$35,990

PGO

www.pgo-scooter.com

SCOOTER
Ligero 150 \$3590
X Hot 150 \$3990

PIAGGIO

www.piaggio.com.au

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SCOOTER
Fly 125 \$2790
Typhoon 125 \$2990
Fly 150ie \$3290
Liberty 150ie \$3490
X7 300 evo \$5990
Yourban 300 \$9990
Beverly 350 \$7990
XEvo 400 \$8990
X10 \$11,990

ROYAL ENFIELD

www.royalenfield.com.au

ROAD
Classic 350 \$TBA
Bullet 500 \$7250
Classic 500 \$7550
Classic Chrome \$7750
Continental GT \$8250

SUZUKI

www.suzukimotorcycles.com.au

ROAD
Inazuma 250 \$4990
TU250X \$5990

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GSX-S1000F	\$15,790
GSX-R1000	\$18,490
GSF1250S Bandit ABS	\$12,990
GSX1250FA	\$14,990
GSX1300R Hayabusa	\$19,290

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VL250 Intruder	\$6690
VL650 S40	\$7990
VL800 C50T	\$12,990
VZ800 M50	\$10,990
VZ1500 C90T	\$17,490
VLR1800T C109RT	\$18,990
VZR1800 M109R	\$18,990
VZR1800 M109R Blk	\$19,490
VZR1800Z M109R SE	\$19,490

ADV TOURING

DR200S	\$4990
DR650SE	\$8090
DL650 V-Strom	\$10,290
DL650 V-Strom LAMS	\$11,290
DL650 V-Strom XT	\$11,490
DL1000 V-Strom	\$15,490

SCOOTER

AN200A Burgman ABS	\$5490
AN650A Burgman ABS	\$13,590

SYM

www.scoota.com.au

SCOOTER

Orbit 125	\$2499
Classic 125	\$2499
VS 150	\$2999
Symphony 150	\$2999
HD Evo 200	\$4699
CityCom 300i	\$5999
Firenze 300	\$6299

TGB

www.tgbscooters.com.au

SCOOTER

X-Race 150	\$3690
Bullet 150	\$3990
BellaVita 300i	\$6390
Xmotion 250	\$6390

TORINO

www.torinomotorcycles.com.au

CRUISER

Veloco 250	\$4695
Titan 250	\$6995

SCOOTER

Famosa 125	\$2590
Famosa 150	\$2990
Galetta Retro	\$2695
Messina Classic	\$3995

TRIUMPH

www.triumphmotorcycles.com.au

*Some Triumph prices are ride away

ROAD

Street Triple 660	\$12,490
Street Triple	\$12,990
Street Triple R	\$13,990
Street Triple RX	\$14,990
Daytona 675	\$13,390
Daytona 675 ABS	\$14,990
Daytona 675R	\$16,990
Bonneville Std	\$12,490
Bonneville Std TT	\$12,990
Bonneville T100	\$14,250
Bonneville T100 SE	\$13,990
Bonneville T100 Black	\$12,490
Bonneville T100 Spirit	\$13,990
Bonneville T214 Land Spd	\$14,490

Bonneville Newchurch

Scrambler	\$14,390
Scrambler TT	\$14,990
ThruXton	\$14,390
ThruXton Ace	\$14,990
Sprint GT SE	\$15,990
Tiger Sport ABS	\$15,990
Speed Triple	\$15,990
Speed Triple ABS	\$16,990
Speed Triple R ABS	\$19,990
Speed 94	\$17,490
Speed 94 R	\$20,490
Trophy Std	\$20,490
Trophy SE	\$27,490

CRUISER

America	\$13,090
Speedmaster	\$13,090
Thunderbird ABS	\$18,490
Thunderbird ABS TT	\$18,490
Thunderbird Storm ABS	\$20,990
Thunderbird Storm Haze	\$21,990
Thunderbird Nightstorm	\$22,990
Thunderbird Commander	\$21,490
Thunderbird Comm TT	\$21,990
Thunderbird Comm LT	\$23,490
Thunderbird Comm LT TT	\$23,990
Rocket III Roadster ABS	\$22,490
Rocket III X	\$23,490
Rocket III Touring ABS	\$23,990

ADV TOURING

Tiger 800 XR	\$15,090
Tiger 800 XRr	\$16,590
Tiger 800 XRt	\$17,890
Tiger 800XC	\$16,590
Tiger 800XCx	\$17,690
Tiger 800 XCa	\$19,390
Explorer 1200 ABS	\$20,490
Explorer 1200 Wire Wheel	\$20,990
Explorer 1200 XRr	\$TBA
Explorer 1200 XCx	\$TBA

URAL

www.imz-ural.com.au

ROAD

cT

ADV TOURING

Tourist	\$23,770
Retro/M70	\$24,918
Ranger	\$24,970

VESPA

www.vespa.com.au

SCOOTER

LX125ie	\$5290
S 150ie	\$5990
LX150ie	\$5990
PX150	\$5990
946	\$11,990
GTS250ie	\$6990
GTS300 Super	\$7990
GTS300 Super Sport	\$8290
GTV300	\$9490

VICTORY

www.victorymotorcycles.com.au

*All Victory prices are ride away

CRUISER

Vegas 8 Ball	\$19,995
Gunner	\$19,995
Highball	\$19,495
Highball Flame	\$20,495
Judge	\$20,995
Hammer 8 Ball	\$20,995
Boardwalk	\$22,495
Boardwalk Red	\$22,995
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BEAR FACED

BUT THAT WAS IN ANOTHER COUNTRY

I am quite good at making my own travel arrangements. I know how to look after the basics, and I'm smart enough to know that there are things I should leave to other people. If I have a short layover at an airport somewhere, for instance, I make sure that both my arriving and departing flights are on the same ticket, and ideally with the same airline. That way, if I do miss the connection it's not my problem, it's the travel agent's or the airline's.

The problem is that when you go on bike launches, someone else makes all the arrangements; often you don't even know what they are until you get that hopelessly inadequate typed-up schedule as you arrive at the airport.

With a group of other Aussie bike scribes I once arrived in Los Angeles, on the way to a launch for a marque that shall remain nameless (after all, there's always a chance that their next launch will go better). It was late in the evening, and to meet us was... nobody. We did have a schedule which claimed that we were spending the night at a certain nearby hotel and would be collected in the morning to be taken to the venue of the launch.

The hotel had no record of us. We showed the schedule to the counter staff, who tried to be as polite as they could whilst telling us that that proved - nothing. I double checked. Were we even in the right hotel? Yes, apparently so. We all booked into rooms and paid for them with our own credit cards, and trooped off to sleep. I still haven't been paid back, and this was years ago. Maybe I should write it off.

I forget what the cause of the screw-up was, because the next night we were treated to bottomless supplies of Gentleman Jack. The consumption of same seems to have affected my memory. It certainly

affected my riding skills in the morning, when I ate a handful of aspirins like peanuts and simply, mindlessly, followed another journo until the fog in my head lifted about lunchtime.

Sometime later I was at another launch, this one in Italy. We were accommodated in a very stylish hotel just up the road from the Pope's summer place at Castel Gandolfo. That didn't stop me from going for a swim in the hotel's ornamental pool, having mistaken it for the swimming pool. I just kept dodging around the fountains and water lilies.

But this feat was eclipsed by one of the others who had demonstrated the truth of the old adage that if you can stay awake until three o'clock in the morning and keep agreeing with the young lady you're talking to, you're in with a good chance. The PR girl must have been disappointed when he lived up to his nickname of "Two Stroke"...

Oh yes. I am not at all sure who the bright spark was who decided to launch a car and a bike simultaneously. First one of the journos insisted on riding a bike when he had not done so for, well, some time. He kangaroo-hopped along until one of the marque executives managed to catch him and take the key away. Then I recorded the slowest time ever around Lakeside in a station wagon, which takes some doing. Then a bike journo kept doing wheelies and smashed his bike's steering head bearings; then

another one fell over in a parking lot and broke his leg.

One of the car journos stayed up rather late drinking Heineken (that's another story). When I came down to breakfast on the second day of the launch, Brian was sitting in a corner with his head turned to the wall. I soon discovered why; he had massive bruising on his face.

"What happened?" I asked. It seemed that the previous evening he had been on his way to the toilet, in something of a hurry, when he walked straight into a glass door. He took me over to the bar, twitched a curtain aside and pointed to the image of his face on the glass, imprinted there in sweat and blood.

"Behold," he announced, "the shroud of Brian."

Brian was also one of the few Australian motoring journalists (he covered both bikes and cars) to be allowed to drive a car on Japan's motorways, during a launch. He had asked to be allowed to do so, but was told that it was "too dangerous" for "inexperienced" non-Japanese drivers. Now Brian was a regular at the so-called "GP Kart" track near Sydney. He produced his membership card and haughtily announced that he was a licensed GP driver. With much embarrassment on the part of the engineers he was allowed to drive the (80km/h) motorways...

Peter "The Bear" Thoeming •



NOD OFF

I wish to address the issue of Inodding at each other while riding bikes. Then we shall never speak of it again because even broaching the subject shames us all and causes sour bile to rise into my throat.

Firstly, let me clarify my position.

I do not care if you nod to fellow riders. I likewise do not care if you do not nod at them.

You wanna nod? Go right ahead.

You don't wanna nod? No problem. No issue. No fault. No foul.

But what I do care about, and what has become a cause célèbre in so many of these nauseating social media ride groups that have spread like diseased fleas through the Internet displacing wondrous pornography and pictures of cats, is the braying of outrage when a nod is not returned.

It's one of those things the noted American satirist, Henry Louis Mencken understood with blazing clarity when he wrote that: "Every normal man must be tempted at times to spit on his hands, hoist the black flag, and commence slitting throats".

I so get that, especially when it comes to keening self-righteous demands for validation that spring from not being nodded back to. I even have a black flag.

"It's a matter of respect!" comes the affronted howl.

No, shit-blisters. It's not. Respect is something one earns from someone else. It takes time and effort. It is not automatically provided just because you happen to ride a bike. I do not respect you because you ride a bike. I actually don't give a malodorous shit whether you do or you don't, thus it is impossible for me to respect the fact that you do. Look, I know you want me to. But I don't. I can't. I don't know you, and despite the fact that you ride a bike, you might be the most depraved and disgusting sub-human creature to ever draw breath. Why would you expect anyone, let alone someone as picky as me, to accord you respect?

You must be one of them New Age self-entitled whelps, huh?

Boy, is life gonna kick a whole mess of self-entitled shit out of you in the next few decades.

"But we are all one brotherhood!" comes the bleating, which also, as it turns out, happens to attract wolves.

Guess what? We are so not at all "one brotherhood".

According to the Bureau of Statistics, there were 807,215 registered motorcycles in Australia in 2015. This may come as a surprise to you, but I do not share any type of brotherhood with the owners of those 807,200-odd machines.

Nor do you, you head-bobbing, look-at-me-I'm-nodding-at-you jit-stain.

You just think you do.

Let me guess. When you bought a bike you were labouring under the impression it would open up a whole new and wondrous world of acceptance to you. It said so on the box, didn't it?

Yeah, well, it didn't.

If you were drum-beating drop-kick with no mates, poor oral hygiene, and frequent flyer points at your local Asian whore-shed when you bought your bike, then you're exactly the same kind of twat now that you have a bike.

If you had no friends then, I can guarantee you that you don't have friends now. Not real ones. Not ones that will help you bury bodies and kill witnesses, which are the only kind worth having.

All you've done by buying a motorcycle is increased your circle of acquaintances among those who have a similar motorcycling interest to yours. I'd wager good money you still spend a lot of time on Tinder and Facebook looking for love and friendship.

"It costs nothing to be polite," say the ones who are polite, as they whimper while smearing themselves in passive-aggressive excrement.

Yeah, actually, it does.

It costs me a few milliseconds of

concentration in brutal peak hour traffic, which I am negotiating with speed, skill and good deal of aplomb, to return your stupid nod. I might die. And the thought that I might die while pandering to your disgraceful and utterly pathetic needs for respect, acceptance, good manners, and self-validation, is simply unbearable.

At the end of the day, you go for your life and nod all you want. If it makes you feel beaut, then who am I to stand in the way of that?

Just don't for pity's sake get all uppity and haughty when your nod is not returned.

Once again, ol' Henry had the right of it. "The most common of all follies is to believe passionately in the palpably not true. It is the chief occupation of mankind," he wrote, probably around the time he realised that there were an awful lot of motorcycle-riding retards nodding at other riders, and then getting all snitty when the nod was not returned.

Smart bloke, Henry. Very observant. Had a good eye for trouble-makers. He could spot venal knob-warts a mile away.

And don't even think of waving at me.

There's a good chance I'll hunt you down if I'm not in a hurry to get to somewhere. ●







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